The PASSING SHOW

No. 333 (New Series), Vol. 7. August 6, 1938

TWOPENCE

Meet MUNGO the Magnificent

by B.L. JACOT

SEEING

"Give us the *30-Second Breakfast* every time!"

SAY MILLIONS OF BUSY WORKERS

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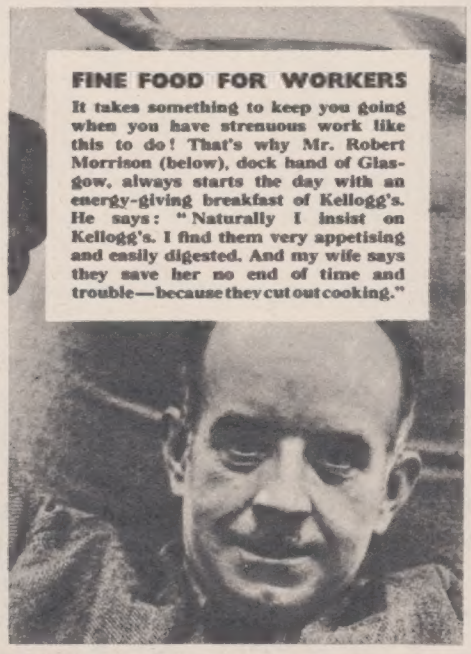

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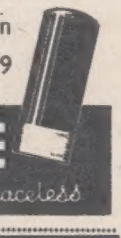

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WEEKLY ILLUSTRATED

EVERY FRIDAY — TWOPENCE

The PASSING SHOW
No. 333. Vol. 7. AUGUST 6, 1938

SHOTGUNS FOR TWO

Uncle Mungo was certainly magnificent when it came to organising a duel, finding a missing portfolio and straightening the crooked path of love . . . but could he interfere !

BY B. L. JACOT

ILLUSTRATED BY M. MACKINLAY

While waiters skipped around and tugged at various legs, arms flailed, oaths flew and groans sounded from the depths of Uncle Mungo's shattered paunch

WHEN Augustine, the maid, showed Flet up into Marthe's heavily-perfumed room overlooking the Mediterranean, his heart began to beat. Marthe always made his heart beat. When she came in from the sun-balcony, eyes wide with surprise, he could only gape at her. She was beautiful ! "Cherie !" she said softly. "What's wrong?"

"There's an old uncle of mine," he began with a rush. "He's just telephoned from Paris that he's coming down here to see me, and——"

"And you cannot see me any more—no?"

"It's not that." He had rushed up from the hotel in his car so fast that he had had no time to think and, now that he was inside Marthe's luxurious little villa, he did not quite know what all the hurry was about. "I wanted to explain about my uncle before he had a chance to get here. You see, he's a sort of family nuisance. He's never had much to do except mess about with other people's affairs—especially mine and Judy's, and——"

"Sit down, Cherie," the Frenchwoman invited. "You shall tell me about him."

"It's like this. He started off in the Army, but he married a barmaid or something and had to resign his commission. You never know when he's going to turn up, or what he's going to do next. And now that I've this important job on my hands down here—it means a lot to me—he has to come barging in about Judy and pestering my life."

"Who is this Judy?" Marthe asked. From where she sat beside him she brushed at the blond hair that always dragged over Flet's forehead. Her fingers were pink and slim and the nails, aluminium lacquered, were hooped in vermilion. Mlle. Coussin had just finished a season in cabaret at Nice, and at the time Flet met her she was on the point of leaving for Paris. But she had stayed on. For more than a week she had stayed on, with Flet.

"Judy," he explained, "is a girl who has just run away from school in Paris. One of these finishing schools. The old aunt who brought me up adopted her when she was a baby, and so I used to see quite a bit of her before I went off to school, myself. It seems she's got herself mixed up with some man now, but she told me nothing about it in Paris."

"You used to see this Judy in Paris?"

"The first thing she did when she arrived about six months ago was to start writing and telephoning to me. I took her out to dance once or twice. And now she's cabled to my aunt that she's going to marry some Russian who plays in a dance band, and everyone's been cabling to me to stop it. If I make a mess of this job they've given me it will take me years to live it down."

"Tell me about your job," the cabaret star invited. "But first you shall drive me in your car into Cannes. I have to meet Henri."

Flet hated this smooth secretary or agent, Henri. As he turned his car along the coast road, leaving Saint Raphael behind, he was thinking he never got Marthe to himself for long. There was always this Henri who looked after her business affairs. He had a nose keen as a hound's for following up other folks' affairs, and two things had been impressed on Flet at the ambassadorial Paris offices of the newspaper that employed him—one was not to talk and the other to keep his papers under lock and key. Flet's ambition was to be a foreign correspondent, one day, and he had held his job safely now for the nine months since he launched himself.

Marthe was watching him from under the brim of her wide hat. "What can there be so important about your job, Cherie?" she laughed. "Even Henri tells me you have an aeroplane waiting at Frejus to take you to Italy at a minute's notice !"

He watched the road for a while, thinking. "My chief in Paris," he said, "fell ill, so they had to give this job to me. I just have to interview someone in Rome, that's all. As soon as the interview comes through I have to hurry. Can I see you to-night?"

She shook her head. "It is business," she shrugged. "It costs money to hire aeroplanes. It must be a very important person you are going to see."

The list of questions Flet had to ask had, at the request of the Foreign Office, been sent to Whitehall, and there a few extra ones had been inserted. He changed the drift of the talk. If he only got half an hour alone with Marthe now and then he did not want to talk about his job. At twenty-three Flet had never met anyone like Marthe before : he was crazy about her and for almost a week now he had been losing his sleep.

Uncle Mungo arrived early next morning, waking Flet by sitting heavily on his bed. Possibly the world's leading meddler, Uncle Mungo weighed all of eighteen stone and you rarely saw him dressed in anything except his old golf suit. He had a complexion so warmly red and a nose so nobly tinted, as it bulged towards a never-failing grin, as to give the impression that he was permanently pleased with everything he saw. But it is doubtful whether anything existed that this old pest would not interfere with.

"Well, m'lad, here I am—what?" he puffed. "Yeh haven't seen the gel, I suppose? Eh?"

"No, I—Here, put that down ! Who told you to rummage through my things? As a matter of fact, it's a cigarette case I bought for someone and——"

"Never keep a lady's present up your sleeve, m'lad ! God bless 'em, they always know it's there, and what with wonderin' what it is, and bein' on their best behaviour so's not to miss the little token of esteem and regard, it gets them——"

"I don't want to hear what you think ! And drop that, will you?" Leaping out of bed, he snatched back the portfolio the old man had pulled out of a drawer.

"Why wouldn't they tell me anything about yeh at that newspaper place where yeh work, eh? Shut up tight as oysters, dash it."

Windmilling into his dressing-gown Flet, decided to tell him. You could depend on Uncle Mungo.

(*please turn over*)

As far as Flet knew, Uncle Mungo, dunned by the family for twenty years, had not yet got round to ridding himself of his barmaid. They still lived happily together at Brighton. But that did not prevent him from getting around every now and then to see how Flet was going along.

"Yeh don't want to fool about with things like this, m'lad," the old man warned. "Foreign Office, dammit! Take it down to the office, at once! Or give it to the police."

"Let everyone know what I've got! Not likely. What are you going to do about Judy?"

"She wrote to me from the Hotel Carvibonne. We've got to bring her back here—eh? Cable your aunt—what? Hurp-prpp! So yeh've not seen her—eh?"

Snatching on his trousers, Flet bounded across to slam down the lid of a suitcase. "Will you stop messing up my things?" he yelled. "Just give me a minute in peace to dress and I'll drive you to Nice."

He was hoping to get the old man out of the hotel before he met anyone he knew, but, as they were sneaking out for the garage, they ran into Marthe. She was talking with Henri, in the foyer, and before Flet knew quite how it all happened Uncle Mungo and Marthe had sent him to fetch the car to take the party into Nice. Those two, it seemed, had hit it off.

They found Judy at her hotel, but she telephoned down that she would see no one. "You go up and speak to her, m'lad," Mungo puffed, pulling at his walrus moustache. "She'll listen to you. Ask her what all this damn nonsense is—eh?"

Flet had to start kicking a. the panels of the door of Judy's room before she would let him in; then, swinging the door open suddenly, she had him at a disadvantage. "I told you to go away," she pointed out, with an edge to her voice.

Flet stared at her. It seemed she had grown up. There was still a boyish slimness about her and her complexion was fresh, but things had been done to her blonde hair and she was certainly dressed differently. "Get your things packed while I ring down for your bill."

She shut the door carefully behind her, then turned. "And after that?"

"You'll come back with us in the car to my hotel. What's all this rot about getting married to a Russian?"

"I told you in my letters in Paris. I don't suppose you bothered to read them."

"I didn't."

"We're going to get married."

In the early days, to get rid of her, when she was following him round, there was not much Flet had not worked off on Judy. She had been sent to buy pigeon's milk, to enquire at the village shop how much the three-penny ices were and, once, Flet shut her up in an old oven and forgot all about her, until she was dragged out, half-suffocated, that night by a startled stable boy. Judy didn't seem to mind. She still followed Flet round.

"I'll knock that fellow's head off if I catch him looking your way—from now on," Flet said.

"I'll tell him. But in the meantime, would you mind getting out?"

"When you've packed. And you'll be coming with me."

She turned on her heel and walked down the corridor, leaving him outmanœuvred. "Judy!" he called and when she took no notice he had to run after her. "Better meet Uncle Mungo," he added.

She stopped. "Who's the woman with him?"

"A friend of mine. Marthe. She's come along with us."

"All the way from Paris? She must be devoted!"

Marthe glancing round caught his eye, shifting quickly to the girl at Flet's side. "Flet, darling!" she laughed. "She is coming back with us!"

Judy was giving away about ten years, but she was not letting that bother her. "Nice for everyone in the hotel to be so interested in my affairs," she allowed at length.

"This must be so sad for you, m'selle," Marthe offered, "coming straight from school."

"You have a good memory to recall, madame, what that must feel like."

"But I never fell in love with a saxaphone player!"

"Girls! Girls!" put in Uncle Mungo. "What about a nice cup o' tea, or something—eh?"

Marthe ignored it. Her eyes were hard. "Cherie," she said to Flet, "take me home."

"Are you going to drive her back to Saint Raphael?" Judy asked, sharply.

"Of course!"

"Well," decided Judy, "I'm coming, too."

That evening Judy's boy friend arrived at the hotel. It seemed he owned the band, had been an officer in some army, and claimed to be a count. It was not so much the smooth technique of his hand kissing and bowing as the way Judy hung on to his every look and word, that got under Flet's skin.

"She can't get married until her guardian arrives from Canada," Flet said, "and you had better get back to your band now."

"I suggest you mind your own affairs," the maestro told him.

"I'll mind your affairs for you soon enough, getting girls out of school and trailing——"

It began to happen swiftly then. Uncle Mungo lurched to his feet in time to intercept a sock under the nose, as Paul, rocking back from a smack under the jaw, kicked Flet sharply behind the knee, bringing all three down in a heap on the carpet. While waiters skipped around and tugged at various legs, arms flailed, oaths flew and groans sounded from the depths of Uncle Mungo's shattered paunch.

When Flet cooled down, the maestro had gone. Uncle Mungo was gasping like a fish, spreadeagled over a chair, and Judy was hitting her clenched hands together, tight-lipped, as she faced him. "Oh!" she was crying. "Don't you realise what this means? To a cavalry officer?"

Flet shook his head to clear it. "Honestly, Judy, I don't know what happened. I just—what d'you mean? Duel?"

"You'll be killed! Oh!"

"Don't be silly! You'll just have to tell him it's off as far as I'm concerned."

"You don't know much about this country. You've insulted him in front of me. Struck him. You'll have to accept his challenge. Sometimes they never mean to hurt each other much, but when——"

"When it's serious," chipped in Uncle Mungo, dabbing his cheek, "it's murder. This is serious, m'boy. You could leave the country to-night."

"I can't leave the country," shouted Flet. "Are you in this, too? Either I'm potty—or else everyone else it." Flet turned away. There was one thing about all the madness he did not quite like. That was a certain appreciative gleam in Uncle Mungo's eye. Uncle Mungo had looked to Flet a little like a man who does not like to miss a good duel when he has a chance of promoting one. But there was not going to be any duel!

Judy was drinking her coffee out on the terrace when Flet left the hotel that evening. Uncle Mungo was at the girl's side and they were watching workmen fork seaweed off the plage into carts on the promenade. Farther down, under the lights, the Municipality was treating itself to a new beach, brought from Frejus on a truck, the greater part of last summer's sand having been carried away in the beach shoes, cars and swim-suits of the visitors.

"Where are you off to?" Judy called.

"To the Villa Rose."

"Have a good time," she jeered and behind his back, as he disappeared, he heard a fruity guffaw from Uncle Mungo.

He found Marthe out on the verandah, and she smiled a welcome that told him the friction of the afternoon was forgotten. The night, stretching away to the Esterel Mountains across the stunted scrub of Les Plaines, was a soft, dark blue. The frogs croaked distantly and a tiny light threw a circle of radiance round her. He told her about the fight, and he could see from the way she laughed that she was amused. As he talked with her his spirits began to soar. Until she shot a request at him.

"Do something for me, Cherie!" she wheedled. "I have always wanted adventure—to fly. Take me with you when you fly to Rome!"

"I would, like a shot," he told her. "But—Marthe, it's quite impossible."

"It is not much that I ask of you!"

"They wouldn't even let me start."

She was offended. He felt he should leave, but perversely she kept him with her, forestalling every polite move he made to go. It was nearly two when he reached the hotel and it did little to cheer him when he stumbled over the girl, Judy. She was wearing a dance frock and a chic, bored air as she mouched around.

"What the heck are you doing about the town at this hour?" Flet demanded, sourly. At the same time he was thinking that, even without a bean of the money Judy one day would have, she could have the pick of any man she fancied. The girl had developed an air. She had looks.

"I've been dancing across at the *Reserve*," she told him. "But I was just going off to bed. Have a good time with your lady?"

"A good time was had by all," he mentioned. "You know, Judy, you're making an awful fool of yourself."

"If I am, at least it's my own affair."

As she said it he could see the gleam of her teeth behind the crimson of her lips. But her eyes, lifted up to him under the long lashes, were steady. Judy always had lovely hands and he noticed the long almond nails, innocent, in their perfection, of any lacquer. "You're a grand looking young lady," he decided. "You'll regret this business. I suppose you must be potty about the man, though. He's not a bad-looking feller."

"How can you say that!" she threw at him.

There is nothing like a duel for clearing the head. Strange feelings were moving him about this girl. "I'll get rheumatism," he stalled, "if you don't lay off my chest"

"I mean, when you've spent the afternoon brawling with him."

"It's not his looks, sweetheart. I object to the way—— Better wait until your aunt arrives."

"Yes! And meanwhile——" A queer, pinched look had come into her face. "I'm going to bed!" she decided. "I don't see why you and Uncle Mungo and everyone should come butting in. Good night!"

It seemed the family was having a late night, for as Flet passed Uncle Mungo's room he saw the door was ajar and that the old pest was propped up in bed, with a cigar in his mouth and a brandy-and-soda at his elbow, reading a novel. "Hello, young feller!" he hailed in a voice that must have called dozens from their sleep. "Back from your wooing, what?"

Flet passed quickly on. He was undressing when he noticed his trunk, and stiffened where he stood. The lock had been forced and when he searched frantically for the portfolio, it was gone. For a while he could not think, but when he calmed down, he caught the trace of cigar smoke. He crossed the corridor swiftly to Uncle Mungo's room.

"You haven't been nosing about, by any chance," he enquired, "in my bedroom? Keep your voice down; all these people need their sleep. Well?"

"Me, young fellah?" Uncle Mungo was startled. "Of course not! Nosing about, eh? Certainly not—prrp-hm. Sittin' here readin' in bed and a doocid interestin' tale it is."

"Never mind that." The snag was that Mungo was such a liar he couldn't even recognise the truth. "Where have you put it?"

"Put what? G'bless my soul, what's wrong?"

"My portfolio has disappeared from my room. My bags are burgled. You'll look all sorts of an ass when I call in the police. Stop playing the fool with me."

"Burgled! You're telling me someone has taken those papers of yours, eh?"

"I'm telling you you've burgled them, because you think they're not safe in my trunk. Where are they?"

The old man had a puffed lip that was still bleeding a little from under lint and plaster. He looked a picture of innocence. "I'm telling yeh, I've never seen your papers, young feller!" he protested. "It was askin' for trouble to leave them about your room."

"I'll have to telephone to the police."

"Of course, what? Telephone to the police, eh? Yes. They're the fellows."

"Some day," Flet said, slowly, "I'm going to murder you, you old fool. Uncle or not. I'll give you to the morning. Good night."

A wire from London woke him in the morning, telling him to leave early next day for Rome. So it had come at last! Slipping on a dressing-gown, he raced over to Uncle Mungo's room, but the old man was gone. He found Mungo out on the balcony, when he was dressed, and it seemed the old man was taking leave of two gentlemen with old-world ceremony. "Better hand over that portfolio," Flet said. "I start to-morrow morning."

Uncle Mungo was still bowing as his visitors receded. "Well," he mentioned, at length, "that's that, m'boy. And I've given 'em something to think about. I've fixed it. I'll bet you'll never guess what you're fighting with!"

Flet's face lengthened. "Fighting? You mean that duel? Don't be silly. I—what's wrong with you?"

Uncle Mungo was convulsed with an inner satisfaction. "Shotguns, m'lad! You can't miss him! How's that for chiselling down the feller's advantage, eh? What?"

Flet took him by the shoulder, filled with a cold rage. "D'you mean to tell me you've been arranging for me to be shot at with a shotgun—by that Russian?"

"Choice of weapons was ours, m'boy. I know my duelling!"

"You're mad!"

Uncle Mungo fixed him. "You're not thinkin' of backin' down, are yeh? They'll say you're yellow."

"What is it now?" a voice asked, and Flet found himself meeting Judy's level eyes. It seemed she had something on her mind. Well, so had Flet. He had to fly to Rome to ask questions and he hadn't the questions and he had to fight a duel with shotguns, first. And this girl was going to marry a gigolo, and Uncle Mungo——

"Oh, nothing at all!" he groaned. "I'm fine."

Uncle Mungo explained, entering into details, and for a while the girl said nothing. Then: "You can't back out now, Flet," she told him.

"So you're in this, too?"

"Paul used to be Sabre Champion at the Academy. He told me he hoped you'd be choosing sabres."

"Too bad! Uncle Mungo's already settled the business. Your friend will blow my head off with a shotgun instead."

"You can't," Judy insisted, "fight a duel with shotguns."

"Stuff! Herp-prrp. Nonsense!" Mungo's pop-eyes bulged indignantly. "That's what they said at first, dammit. But I know my duello. As the challenged party we have the choice of weapons, terrain and umpire. Shotguns it is, whether they like it or not—eh?"

"Whether *they* like it!" Flet echoed, with a crack in his voice.

"Under the rules of the international code, as I was telling those two johnnies just now, the challenged party's second, and the umpire so constituted in the terrain of the country in which the duello is to be——"

Throwing his hands to his ears, Flet left them. Before he began to rave, himself, he wanted to see Marthe. But at the Villa Rose, Augustine would not meet his eye when she told him Marthe had left by car early that morning. She insisted that she did not know where her mistress had gone, but she told Flet Henri had left with her. "You gentlemen," she said, "have been in the wars. Monsieur Henri had an eye like a tomato. There has been perhaps a little trouble?"

He hurried back to the hotel. There was something wrong here, and he wondered if Mungo had had anything to do with this, too. The old man was in conference with a boss-gendarme and he had to wait until the official had gone. "What happened to Marthe?" he demanded. "Don't bother to lie. You've been brawling with Henri. How did you get that fresh cut on your lip, eh? I believe you gave him that black eye!"

"Eh? What? Black eye? Er-certainly. Of course! Just a little misunderstanding, as yeh might say. No ill feelin's, I mean ter say. So——"

"If you've been fixing this duel up with the police, you're wasting your time. I'm not going to fight. I'm going back to Paris. By car, *and now*!"

"Listen to me, m'lad!" the old man pleaded. "Yeh can't do that. Yeh can't leave me with Judy and this mess on my hands, what? Yeh've got to make a go of your job. Dammit! Yeh've got to

(*please turn to page* 32)

FAST AS THEY MAKE 'EM

No dog can go as fast as the money you put on him, said the cynic, but even a canny Scot has to learn through bitter experience

BY D. WILSON MACARTHUR

ILLUSTRATED BY JACK GRANDFIELD

WILLIE CARMICHAEL, of Shalloch, cupped his whisky glass in both hands and addressed it, with solemn affection.

"There's folks," he declared, "who think they ken a dog when they see one. There's folks who think their own dogs can run. But you and me ken fine there's only one dog in the whole of Carrick that can lift a foot—and that's . . . weel, no matter. You and me ken."

He squinted up, without lifting his head, to investigate the effect of this speech.

It was market day, and the Black Bull Inn was crowded with shepherds, farmers, drovers, auctioneers and dealers. Everybody knew how Willie Carmichael of Shalloch had fared that day, and more than a few were watching to see how he would take it. He had expected to sell a large flock to a big dealer from the south, but Jock Armstrong of Gannock had got the dealer's ear before him, and Shalloch had had to content himself with the lesser fry.

Jock Armstrong was there now—huge, dark, fiery and triumphant. He and Willie Carmichael were old enemies. He stiffened at Willie's first words, and his big hands, holding a pipe and a whisky glass, began to tremble. His eyes kindled, his neck flushed under the collar. He scowled once at Willie and then at the assembled crowd, tossed down his whisky and slapped the glass down with a grunt to Andra Struthers, the landlord.

"Aye," Willie went on, musing gently. "Dogs and dogs! There a wheen proud bodies think they own good dogs. But there's no' a dog in all creation the like of a dog we ken, eh now? Only some folks will never admit when they're beat."

Jock Armstrong took a stride forward, the scowl deepening.

"Are you referring to me, Shalloch?" he rasped; and Willie glanced up at him, sly-eyed, with a quirk on his lips that would have made many a less sharp-tempered man fetch him a clout in the teeth.

"Weel, now, if it isn't Gannock himself! And how's the wee dog, Gannock? Is she still trying to catch yon rabbit I saw her chasing a week ago come Wednesday?"

"Rabbit!" Armstrong grated, stung. "There's no' a leveret in Carrick she couldn't run down—aye, in two shakes of her tail!"

"Did ye ever, now?" Willie ejaculated, mightily astonished. "What way was she peching and panting after yon wee rabbit for, then? But maybe she's no' weel?"

"She's as weel as ever she was," Armstrong retorted, his temper fraying. It was well known that he doted on his greyhound bitch. "Aye, and what's more, Shalloch," he went on, loudly, "if ye think yon lanky skinnymalink of a Flash of yours could come within a hunder yards of her in a two-furlong field ye can think again!"

Willie grinned up at him. This was what he wanted—the fish rising to his bait.

"Right!" he said, suddenly losing his jocosity and becoming sharp. "Right, Gannock! We'll just try that!"

For two years their enmity had nursed a mortal rivalry, ever since Willie had been up in the city and had seen a greyhound racing track, and come home full of the wonders of it—a leash of dogs chasing a bit stuffed skin round a ring. There had always been greyhounds in Garrick; as far back as anyone could remember most of the farmers had bred them—but not to chase uselessly in circles after a stuffed electric dummy.

City folk, of course, were queer bodies. They had strange notions. They were terrible ignorant, the poor creatures—setting a hound to chase a stuffed skin! That was no way to treat a fine beast and everyone of them was convinced that no dog of his would be taken in by such a trick.

But just recently Willie Carmichael of Shalloch had been observing his Flash with greater attention than usual, and it had seemed to him that Flash was in wonderful form. He had started a hare the other day in a twenty-acre field and had him down inside of a minute and a half. Willie had an idea that here lay his chance of settling accounts.

"I'll take ye!" Armstrong cried, thumping the table with his fist and making Willie's glass dirl as it jumped. "I'll take ye!"

Willie sat up and pulled a wallet from his pocket. It was a well-filled wallet, in spite of the loss of that big sale, for he had got rid of a parcel of sheep in the end. He pulled out a fat wad of banknotes, and began thumbing it over. He counted out ten pounds and slapped them down on the table.

Armstrong glowered at him, and pulled a handful of loose paper money from his breeches pocket.

"Count that!" he growled and Andra Struthers came forward. He looked from one to the other, his head on one side. Armstrong of Gannock was still red with his anger, Carmichael of Shalloch still smiling, sly and confident. Andra was a peaceable man. He took the notes and counted them.

"Twenty-seven," he said, and Willie added to his own pile to make it up.

"Hold the stakes, Andra," he invited, "and give us a dram to wet the bargain."

The landlord complied with alacrity. The glasses were filled again. The room hummed with talk.

"Here's to a grand race!" someone cried, and a shout went up. Willie got to his feet.

"The morn's morn," he said. "At ten o'clock, in the big field ahint here, if the landlord'll no' mind."

"Ye're right welcome, gentlemen," Andra assured them, stuffing the stakes into his pocket. "Ye're right welcome. And I'll steward for ye, forby."

Willie set down his empty glass.

"I'll awa' and tell Flash. He'll be right tickled to hear o't."

Armstrong followed him out. The collie he had with him, a shaggy, sour-natured beast, got in the way at the door, and he trod on its paw. It turned on him, with a snarl. Armstrong lifted his boot and sent it flying out into the road, with a curse.

At the same moment, they almost cannoned into someone entering the inn, and they stood aside with a simultaneous ejaculation.

"Guid God!" Willie breathed. "Whatever's yon?"

Jock Armstrong gaped. But even his amazement would not allow him to discuss anything with Carmichael of Shalloch, and he strode out into the gloaming. Willie lingered, staring at the door that had closed against him, and cocking a sly head to one side, thinking.

"Yon" had been enough to give any man a start. It was a female—a young female, Willie considered—in a long tweed skirt, a woollen jumper of startling eccentricity of design, a gaudy silk scarf, a shapeless felt hat from beneath which lank rat's tails of sandy hair protruded.

Willie had an astounded vision of large flat shoes and thick stockings, of a face like a horse's, with a long red and shiny nose, and rabbit's teeth, and large drooping eyes, and a faint suggestion of chin, and a long thin neck. Also a rucksack, crammed and overflowing, with what looked like bits of stick and wooden boxes protruding from it.

In one hand this object had trailed a dirty mackintosh; in the other, an unidentifiable bundle. She had disappeared through the swing doors into the "Black Bull" with only one glance at them.

Willie stood and considered. He looked up the street. Armstrong was already leading his pony from the yard, and clambering up into his dogcart—a fine great figure of a man. Willie watched him settle himself and, with a mere flick of the reins, set the pony off at a smart pace down the street. He had a good ten miles to go, to reach his farm.

Willie lingered. His own place, Shalloch, was twice the distance from the village, up among the wild moors and sheep pastures; but Willie had a car. He had no need to hurry. He turned about and went back into the inn.

There was a stir inside. It centred round the strange female apparition and Willie, holding back to watch and listen, felt the first stirrings of an idea at the back of his mind.

She was talking in a high, odd drawl, out of which it was impossible to recognise more than an occasional word.

"Londoner," Willie thought to himself, for he had once been in London. "And a gey queer specimen!"

Jock Armstrong gaped. But even his amazement would not allow him to discuss anything with Carmichael of Shalloch, and he stole out into the gloaming

Suddenly she turned and saw him. She lifted her arm and pointed a long thin forefinger at him.

"You," she said. "You were with that man!"

Willie goggled.

"What man?"

"That brute who kicked the dog. You're a friend of his!"

"Gannock? Why, no, mem," Willie exclaimed. "He's nae friend of mine!"

"You were with him!" she accused. Willie shrugged. The crowd was listening, if anything more amused than puzzled by this astonishing attack. But the strange female suddenly turned back to Andra, as if she had abruptly forgotten Willie's existence.

It appeared that she desired accommodation. Andra was none too pleased. He had seen occasional hikers, although Carrick was not the country for them, with its high desolate moorland pastures; but he discovered that here was no hiker. She wanted to stay at the "Black Bull," not for a night or two but for several weeks. And when she ingenuously translated the landlord's doubtful muttering into five guineas a week, her room and board were secured. Business, after all, is business.

Carmichael was intrigued. He liked to air his knowledge of London and Londoners. So he stayed and warmed his hands at the fire until the market-day crowd departed, and he was left alone in possession. The idea was beginning to take shape. He summoned the landlord.

"Andra," he said, "I'm thinking maybe I'll bide a bit, if ye can give me a bite o' supper."

Andra nodded.

"Ye'll hae to eat it wi' the lass, then," he said. "It'll be ready in a quarter hour."

Willie agreed to eat his supper with the lass; and presently he sat down to the "Black Bull's" best spread, facing her across the long white table.

"Ye've taken a notion to these parts, mem?" he began, with a friendly, respectful smile. The strange young female looked at him with large melting eyes and nodded. Willie blinked a little, but held to his purpose.

"Everyone is so *real*," she whispered, suddenly, in a very intense tone and her eyes shone at him. Willie swallowed hard. But he had never yet been at a loss in strange circumstances and, from many years of handling sheep, he prided himself on understanding the female mind. After all, when a man has acted midwife to more than twenty thousand ewes in his day, he gets to know a lot about human nature.

This, however, was an entirely new manifestation of human nature. Her name, he was told, was Millicent Foster-Hythe. She lived in Chelsea.

"Aye, I ken!" he cried, eagerly. "Where auld Tam Carlyle used to bide. The Sage of Chelsea, they ca'ed him. And ye'll be a bit of a pheelosopher yersell, mem, if I may make so bold as to ask?"

But Millicent was not interested in Thomas Carlyle. Indeed, she seemed only vaguely conscious of having heard the name somewhere before. Millicent was an artist.

She loved, she informed him, these rugged Borderers, with their deep resonant voices, their bellowing laughter, their broad speech that she could not understand. "What types!" she cried, ecstatically.

Willie, struggling along against a feeling that he was drowning in a lake of words, tried his hardest to understand. But he did not forget that he was paying for his supper at the "Black Bull"—and he had never been much interested in food.

He was a shrewd man and, accustomed all his life to summing up the qualities of animals, particularly female animals, in a mere glance, he considered that he could find out all he wanted to know about any human animal in half a glance. His vague idea began to take definite form.

"Weel, mem," he said, when Millicent for the moment had thrilled herself out of breath, "if it's types ye want, what about Jock Armstrong—him that kicked the collie?"

That produced an outburst. He had expected it. He knew there were females in the cities who thought all dogs should be treated like spoiled children. Millicent was outraged. She wanted Willie to kick Armstrong and kick him hard. But Willie had a better idea. He brought up the point that mattered.

"Gannock and me," he said, "we had words the night. We're aye having words. We're for settling the matter the morn, in the field out-by, and Andra here's holding the stakes. Twenty-seven pounds apiece."

Millicent's eyes glowed.

"A fight?" she cried, clasping her hands.

"No—no' a fight. A race."

"A race? On horseback?"

She had visions of those two stalwarts, bareback on fast mounts, racing across the fields, thundering on mighty steeds fit to carry their compact weight of muscle and bone and sinew, so different from the slender-legged beasts that carried those little wizened monkeys they called jockeys. But Willie disillusioned her.

"Dogs," he said. "Greyhounds. My Flash against his Bess o' Blairechty. And Flash'll win!"

"A dog race!"

This was something new. In Chelsea one did not go to the dog races. Millicent was prepared to be thrilled. She could feel the impact of stern rivalry, of hatred, primeval things.

"Greyhounds?" she questioned.

"Aye, greyhounds. They bred greyhounds in Scotland while your forebears, mem—begging your pardon—were going around with blue paint on their bodies."

"And yours will win?"

"Never a doubt but he'll win, mem. Ye've no' seen that Bess o' Blairechty, or ye wouldnae wonder."

"Why? Is she no good?"

"No guid? She couldnae run a mile to save her life. She's starved, that's what she is. Starved! Gannock, he'll feed his pigs and his hens, but a hound—devil a bit! Now a good square meal—say a pound and a hauf of good, raw red meat—that'd put mettle in her heels! But lacking it—it's a fair shame, making her run on an empty stomach!"

Millicent's eyes filmed over.

"What a sin!" she cried. "The poor thing! Poor dumb thing! How can he behave like that?"

"Ach, a hard man, Gannock. Ye saw him kick the collie. 'Let her catch her own dinner!'—that's what Gannock says. And the poor wee beastie, if she doesnae run down the hare he sets her after, she goes without. Many's the time I've seen her going without!"

Millicent's thin face took on a hungry, yearning look. He saw the birth of a determination in her eyes.

"Aye, and what's more, mem," he went on, impressively, "I've tried myself to give that poor thing a bit bite to eat, but devil the chance! Gannock'd flay onybody that tried."

"Oh, would he?" Millicent exclaimed.

"Aye, so he would. If a body was thinking of giving poor Bess a bit dinner, they'd best not let onybody see them doing it!"

He emptied his tea-cup.

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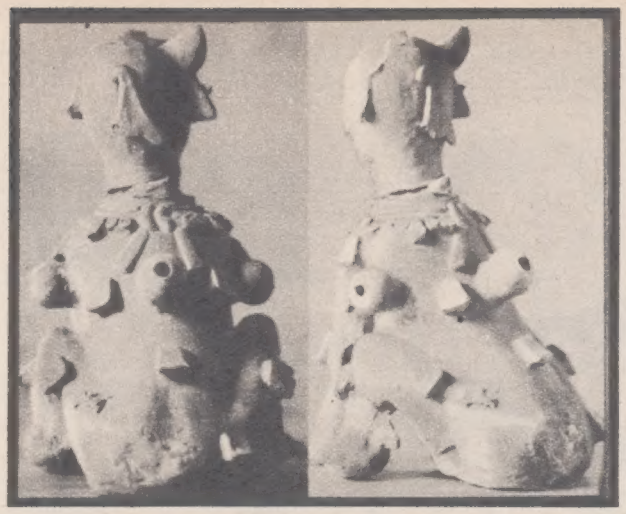
IMAGES OF TIME

BY JOHN ROWLANDSON

American explorers and scientists are now searching the roof of South America in the hope of finding the answer to one of the world's greatest problems

A remarkable, excavated statue on Easter Island



Exclusive photographs taken by Colonel Alexander Braghine during a recent trip to San Salvador, when he unearthed remains of a central American civilisation that existed probably ten thousand years ago. Lying deep in jungle morass, covered with creepers and dense foliage, weathered by centuries of torrential rains, these remnants of a forgotten civilisation bear undeciphered hieroglyphic texts which might tell the world's most romantic story. Meanwhile, altars, pyramids and monolyths show unmistakable influence of Egyptian and Chinese cultures, causing archeologists another headache. If only they could read these inscriptions

UP to town with the morning paper, catching a glimpse of it on the way. Bolting a chop, with the lunch edition propped against the cruet stand. Home again with a late extra, flattened against the crowd in the train.

Yesterday is on the files. To-morrow will soon be going to press. With the scene picked out in detail by the floodlight on the news, we get a breathless vision of the passing of our time. The pace seems almost cracking. But we have only just begun. It seems only like yesterday that Caxton came home with a printing-press to give us a closer view of life.

It is all in the point of view. Stand back a little and what do we see from there. The passing of centuries, where we are used to days. From farther back, we see milleniums move across the screen; followed, each one, by its past and following its future. Detail may be levelled out. But values rise in true perspective.

We are seeing life. The whole of life, since life came into the world. Millions of years are passing by, peopled with teeming life. Lands change places with neighbouring seas, preparing the scene for man.

Arriving late for the final act, he missed a lot of the show. And even then he had no means of telling us what it was like. Before doing that he must learn to write, and some other things as well; like keeping alive in the Age of Ice, when glaciers rolling down, scattered the landscape, here and there, and ground the naked rock.

He did not do so badly, starting with empty hands. With nothing at all to go on, except the will to win, he made his fire and flaked his flints and invented human speech. He stood and left his footprint in the cave where he used to draw; the drawings he left to make us think, if we took him for less than man.

He buried his dead in ways that show us something of how they had lived; in long barrows, round barrows, beaker graves and cists. In their succession they mark the dates until he could learn to write. Shall we leave as much for the people who find us, in tens of thousands of years from now? Our steel will long have perished, while the Stone Age flints live on.

The messages pictured in fossil and stone are those that really last and, even with them, it is very much a matter of slender chance. We might all of us make good fossils, if we could depend on staying put, after dying in a suitable place; like the old Siberian mammoths, frozen where they belonged, complete in every detail, down to their final meal of pine needles, buttercups and wild thyme.

Although they happen now and then, such illuminated passages are rare in the cryptogram of prehistory. Cromer Forest Bed has thrown its light on a palæolithic dawn, giving a glimpse of the lives of men, who hunted and were hunted, in a balmy valley of a pre-glacial Rhine, long since under the grey North Sea. Then, Champollion found the Rosetta Stone and pushed the written word some brief milleniums back among the mysteries of the Nile.

Otherwise, the story has been pieced together by men, who react to the clues in fossil and stone as a sleuth to a set of fingerprints. More, in fact, for they follow the trail across the world and back, often through places where even a bloodhound might feel out of touch.

An expedition now, from the American Museum of Natural History, is exploring an isolated plateau on the Southern rim of the Orinoco basin. It is an old-world spot, which may have stood before the Andes rose. Since before our time erosion has cut it adrift from the outside world. It looks very like the place that Conan Doyle had in his mind, when he sent Professor Challenger out exploring "The Lost World."

But still no doubt, in spite of jungle and inaccessible cliffs, Dr. Tate, the leader of the party, has found a way. He has done this kind of thing before. Only last autumn we saw him looking for life on the crumbling roof of Arizona. Under his feet stood tier upon tier of the masonry of time, sheer down to the river bed a mile or so below, and cut like a cake for three hundred miles by the flow of the Colorado.

Whatever Dr. Tate may find will be of interest, but, most of all, we should like to hear some more about ourselves.

Even in the recent world, while humankind has cut its teeth, some chapters of our tale, within a tale, have been obscured. Landmarks that we used to know have altered, or have gone, with the comings and the goings of the ice that drove us from the valleys to the shelter of the caves.

The bears we sometimes found inside were troublesome, at first, and we had to use our fire to drive them out. Sabre Tooth has wandered south, or perished in his tracks. Our elephant, the old straight tusker, came with us to Europe. But now he has gone away again, and the smooth rhinoceros, too.

When the hairy mammoth took his place, the woolly rhinoceros came as well, with the aurochs, the lemming, the Arctic fox and the striped hyena came out in spots. The reindeer seems to have come to stay, but how long shall we remain who have learned, since we came here, to flake more useful things from our flints than the awkward eoliths we had.

Meanwhile the cyclopean monuments in desert and in jungle, in intriguing disproportion on small, oceanic isles, which antedate mythologies and seem to have no link with the earliest prehistories of any peoples known, must be laid to the account of some long vanished race of men, who reached, perhaps, man's highest yet, while we were knapping flint.

And how many chapters, as full as ours, have fallen like this and never been found?

If we could read the stories dimly pictured on the lava rocks of Easter Island; if someone could decipher what is written on the backs of those tall and lonely figures standing, staring out to sea, then we might share a thought with unknown men, who occupied those great stone houses, learning why they built so big in such a little place. We might also share a smile with them, at something lying on the ground; a Neolithic implement of stone, left about by someone in the last few thousand years, how many thousands after those big builders had passed on?

Small as it is, there are many volcanoes on the triangle of Easter Island. But the Pacific is so full of volcanoes and old volcanic stuff. From Japan to the Rocky Mountains, from New Zealand to the Andes, they stand against the skyline, large and small; the Carolines, the Philippines, Hawaii, the Marquesas, Tahiti and Samoa and the rest.

What of the ones we see no more; the thousands that have gone below? In our peep at life we have seen a lot of these islands come and go. Speaking in terms of a longer view, Professor Dana has wistfully said, that every coral atoll is a memory of departed land—a crown upon a mountain top that stands up underneath, as one no less than Darwin pointed out.

The head of a prehistoric Incan God, excavated near the shore of Lake Titicaca, Bolivia. Below: a monolyth found at Copan

So we meet the vanished builders again, in and out of the sea. They left a long forecast of Venice at Ponape in the Carolines, with artificial islets as well as hand-made waterways, among the old lagoons. A quadrangle there, two hundred feet each way, is vaulted and its inner courts are walled with basalt, eight feet thick and more, brought by sea from thirty miles away. People who could ferry stuff like that about could also get about the sea themselves.

It seems they did. Far beyond the land they knew, whose mountain tops remain, their rumour echoes here and there across the lands we know. There was the strange case of the coffee planters of southern Patagonia, who were there before any known inhabitants of that part.

They tamed, and took into domestic service, some near relations of the mylodon, a monstrous ancestor of the ground sloth. That was not a thing the big-footed Indians, who came to live there later, would have done.

Thousands of miles to the north of this, by way of the Andes, lake Titicaca is apt to take one by surprise. No dew pond this, nor yet a mountain tarn, but an inland sea to look at, 12,500 feet above sea level. It covers 5,000 square miles and 100 fathoms will not always find the bottom.

They knew Titicaca. Otherwise how to explain the unknown metallurgists, who left the pieces of their craft all the way from there to Mexico. Not the Mayas nor the Toltecs nor the Aztecs, whose standard of living may have taken Hernando Cortes by surprise.

Spinning the globe half a day forward brings in sight the caves of Elephanta, near Bombay. Brahmin Aryans, well inside the history book, carved those great figures of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, Siva the Destroyer and the lesser ones. But as to excavating, out of the rock, the cathedral like interior of those gigantic chambers, did they also manage that? Did they find it done for them, by people who had gone before; people whose descendants were ancestors of theirs, far north in the valleys of the Oxus and Jaxartes, before they themselves came south to steal India from the Dravidians?

One may ask. For up in northern India the strangest thing was brought to light from the archives of a temple, some years ago.

This thing was a map of South America, engraved on stone, with astronomical figuring, which dated it a hundred and seventy thousand years ago. Of places marked upon it some are left to-day. Lake Titicaca is clearly shown, with the town of Tiahuanaco standing, as it stands now, to the south of it.

So it would seem that they did know Titicaca; those people who could survey a continent, long before we ever knew that continent was there.

What other things did the wanderers learn, that we may also learn, one day. What heights did they attain, to which we may aspire? What pitfalls did they fall into, that we may keep our feet from? What was their fate?

It is a question to which the enterprising scientists of a race now trying to carve its initials on the continent that defeated them, may find an answer on that south American plateau this year.

The eastern side of the gateway of Ak Kapana (Gate of the Sun) Tiahuanaco, Bolivia

MIDSUMMER NIGHT

Mrs. Wospottle, wise woman of marshland, always wanted to know a little more than would be good for her, but she was a little more careful after her Midsummer Night's adventure

BY S. L. BENSUSAN

ILLUSTRATED BY W. J. TURNER

BOY MAT inspires neither interest nor affection, resentment nor dislike. The village of Nutting is not singular in possession of a nit-wit; they are to be found, here and there, throughout marshland; intermarriage is said to be responsible. Through the centuries Maychester lads and Nutting lasses have married Maychester lasses and Nutting lads, Great Mudford would hesitate to marry into Little Mudford, Rasing Tye and Meadowbank meet but do not mingle their respective blood streams. Villages, like individuals, "keep theirselves to theirselves."

Boy Mat is no more than one of the less successful results of rigid exclusiveness in a village where every man could claim a cousinship with his neighbour; indeed Matthew Metson has fallen so far that nobody troubles to remember his surname. Boy Mat suffices when they want him to row out to one of the sailing boats in the estuary or go "up street" on an errand, drive pigs or sheep, pick peas and fruit, or top and tail roots.

His father, Mark Metson, widower and fisherman, treats him with a certain toleration, never striking him, even when he becomes excited and incoherent at the full of the moon, letting him live as he will and listening or pretending to listen when the lad, now "in his seventeen," tells his father of the folk of wood and waterway and how they come and go.

Mat told none save his father and his father kept silent lest authority should take his only child, chain him up in a madhouse and beat and bleed him if he grew too excited. People might tell you that "madhousen" are not given to such unspeakable cruelties but Mark Metson, who had "read a piece" in a book, knows better; so did his wife.

He taught Mat to swim and would have made a fisherman of him if the boy had not been so squeamish; he would neither impale worms nor clean live fish. Before he had heard the word "vegetarian" he had eschewed meat, he refused to snare rabbit or trap rat. If he drove stock to market or from farm to farm he would protect them from ill usage. Between him and the farm animals on the marsh farm next his father's cottage there was a curious intimacy. Pigs, sheep, poultry, horses and cows would come when he called them; often they did not wait to be called.

Even Tartar, the great shorthorn bull on Trufitt's, which carried a nose ring and was exercised on a pole, would welcome him to his stall and his fierce little eyes would cease to express hatred of man.

Perhaps the most surprising part of Boy Mat was his supreme content. It did not irk him to be unlike other boys, to be shabby, to go hungry, to be ill-paid for small services faithfully rendered, or to be laughed at by the girls of the village. These happenings were no more than the incidents of sun and wind and rain, of the passing of the seasons.

Mrs. Wospottle, wise woman of the marshlands, often stopped him on the road to exchange a few words; he had kindled her interest.

She alone in marshland grasped the truth that Boy Mat had special gifts, the gifts to which she laid unfounded claim. Clairvoyance and clair-audience were not even names to her, but she knew that "powers" existed for some folk and that the lad had a share of them. It was not very difficult to get sufficient of his confidence to learn that his mental state was affected by the moon and that when it was at the full his vision, or whatever it might be, was keenest.

"If I goo gatherin' herbs o' healin' on Midsummer Eve would you like to come along o' me," demanded the Wise Woman.

"I don't mind," replied Boy Mat, who never uses more words than he needs.

"Then," said Mrs. Wospottle, "do you be up at mine, eight o'clock sharp, an' I'll have a mite o' bread an' cheese an' some cocoa ready an' we'll goo over to Bellropes. The moon'll be mos'ly at th' full but not quite."

Mrs. Wospottle, who lives on the outskirts of Great Mudford, is perhaps the last of her kind. Between sixty and seventy, grey-haired, with aquiline features and piercing eyes, she is a respected figure in marshland. Wearing a red-lined cloak, carrying a long stick in one hand and a basket for herbs of healing in the other, she will go the wood at hours when all save poachers and gamekeepers are in bed; she claims to be on friendly terms with them "planits"; they include Sirius and other stars of light and leading.

If Boy Mat had anything to teach she was ready to learn; it would be a simple matter to state thereafter that she was the teacher, the boy would not contradict her and nobody else could; he had no intimates, no friends. On his part, Boy Mat was quite satisfied to accompany the Wise Woman to the wood. How should he know that the greatest ambition of Mrs. Wospottle's life was to share the gift she thought he possessed?

Something within her said that there were matters just outside her ken, that the powers she claimed so glibly existed, though not for her.

Boy Mat might open the door at which she had been knocking since she started to carry on the works of her mother, that clever herbalist, who could cure some ailments and in the last days of a long life had told her daughter that she had seen things. "But," she had concluded, "I only see them whiles."

The June night was full of mysterious beauty when old woman and young lad moved from the cottage across the meadow and walked down what is called a green lane on the way to Bellropes Wood. Nobody was stirring, the ripening of grass and the spread of wild flowers had been quite exceptionally early, hay making was in full swing.

At that hour the scented fields were deserted save by a few hares and rabbits that sat on their haunches surveying, with astonishment or dismay, an utterly unfamiliar scene. The hedges were filled with vetches and mallows, wild roses and veronica. 'Lijah, Mrs. Wospottle's one child, an unmarried man of thirty, was playing the violin in the cottage they had left behind; the notes reached them with a strange wailing sound. By the edge of a cornfield a corncrake called like a lost soul.

At the edge of the wood, under the moon's pale light, honeysuckle swung its censers of perfumed clusters, colour lingered on rose and willow herb, creamy dogwood flowers were ablaze above musk, mallow and centaury. On either side, the bracken had risen, here and there early ragwort flowered and brambles gave abundant promise of blackberries to come. A nightjar hawked over the bracken, two brown owls answered one another across the ride.

"We want to go to the clearing, Granny," declared Boy Mat, with an easy confidence that the Wise Woman was very far from sharing. She did not like to hear brown owls talking in that familiar fashion.

They came at last to what he called the clearing, a comparatively open space about an acre in extent, from which the oaks and chestnuts were cut in the years of the Great War; a path at the far end connected two rides. Now the bracken had spread, but willow herb had kept a corner and ragwort persisted. Two tree stubs within a couple of yards of one another and nearly hidden by bracken were the goal of Boy Mat's quest.

"If you set on one an' I set on t'other an' we keep quiet," he said, "we'll see th' little folk."

The Wise Woman sat down very suddenly; she could do no other, she was horribly frightened. It is one thing to talk of "them stars an' planits"; to declare that you have words of power with which to compel them to do your bidding; it is quite another matter to go into the Bellropes clearing at ten o'clock on Midsummer Eve, when fairies are about, in company with a half-witted boy who would look upon such apparitions without fear.

Three times in the next dreadful half hour he raised his hand very quietly and pointed to something invisible to the Wise Woman and each time he did so her distress increased. "Them stars an' planits" are a good way off, but if there were anything real in Boy Mat's gestures they suggested the presence of unearthly things close at hand. Of course, she wanted to see them, but at the same time she dreaded the experience.

Why, she asked herself, had she ventured out into the wilds, and she recalled the case of Rob Reeve, who rambled across country at all hours of the night and claimed to have seen "forever o' fairies" and ended his days in the County Asylum where, as his sorrowful wife told Mrs. Wospottle,

Mrs. Wospottle scrambled to her feet, dragged Boy Mat up, and, taking his reluctant hand, fled down the ride away from the monster

he continued to see them. But it was only when Boy Mat raised his hand for the fourth time and began to sway his body to and fro that the Wise Woman felt that the limit of endurance had been reached.

She was about to give relief to her overwrought nerves when Boy Mat crouched suddenly. She tried to whisper but there was no utterance in her lips, chill fear gripped her heart—not without cause.

Across the ride, not forty yards away, a large, heavy-horned beast like a cow, but with a maximum of flank and a minimum of feet, moved aross their line of vision. It did not walk like a cow of this earth, but with a gliding action, turning its head from side to side as though to seek what it might devour.

Mrs. Wospottle could feel the boy moving silently towards her through the bracken as though for shelter and in that moment it came to her that she must protect him against the powers of evil he had evoked. With an immense effort she forced her eyes to follow the monstrous apparition that mercifully was moving away from them. It paused at the end of the path into a glade while a strange owl hooted from a nearby tree and, as though in response, there was a sudden flash of lightning that came, not from the heavens, but from the cow.

Without a moment's hesitation Mrs. Wospottle scrambled to her feet, dragged Boy Mat up, apparently against his will, and taking his reluctant hand turned and fled down the ride away from the monster. They were not followed, but the path to the high road seemed interminable. Happily it came to an end at last and there, tramping peacefully from the *Wheatsheaf*, Mr. Woodpecker and Mr. Tansy, both of Smallgains Farm were pursuing the homeward way.

"Why Martha, what bin an' skeered ye?" demanded Mr. Woodpecker.

"I dussn't talk about it, ne yet daren't Mat, Solomon," she cried, "but I'll walk along o' each o' th' both o' ye an' don't you ast me nawthen f'r I don't talk. If it ha'n't bin f'r me old planit," she added, indicating a large and distant star with her stick, "she'd ha' had us." Nothing more was said; they parted company at the Four West Way from which the Wise Woman's road lay down a peaceful, moon-lit lane.

By now Boy Mat seemed to have recovered his equanimity.

"Don't forget them herbs o' healing," he said suddenly, and forthwith Mrs. Wospottle clutched with nervous hands at white elderberry clusters and heads of ragwort and paused, not without effort, by the side of the little stream to gather meadow plume thistle, water mint, bog pimpernel and shallow-rooted sundew, with some tufted vetch and valerian.

Her wicker basket was not filled when she pressed the lid down and declared herself satisfied. "You better come home along o' me an' lay rough in the kitchen, Boy Mat," she added.

"Very well, Granny," the boy replied, indifferently, and Mrs. Wospottle could sense that his thoughts were far away. 'Lijah had gone to bed but there was still a cheerful fire and the kettle hanging from its chain sang cheerfully.

"Another drop o' cocoa an' a mite o' cake," declared the Wise Woman, now captain of her soul, "and then you can lay on th' couch and set 'Lijah's coat over ye; th' room's nice an' warm."

Boy Mat nodded his thanks but spoke no word. "He might ha' brought his body back an' left his brines where we come from," Mrs. Wospottle remarked to her bed when she had turned down the lamp and banked the fire and gone up the old, creaking staircase to her own room.

"Sakes alive," she went on drowsily as sleep approached, "I never did in all me born days. There's something ain't right about that boy; he must ha' drawed that gre't old beast. That's a marcy it never see us. Might ha' done me a mischief without his bein' able to help it." But she slept soundly and when she reached the kitchen both 'Lijah and Boy Mat had gone.

For the next couple of hours she was busy with her herbs of healing, washing, boiling, straining, sweetening and then pouring from the big saucepan into a stone jar; it was but a small brew.

The day passed uneventfully. 'Lijah came home to tea but he brought no gossip with him and was promptly denounced for a fool's head. Accustomed to rebuke, he ignored it and ate his way stolidly through his meal.

Then he went out and Mrs. Wospottle retired from the sitting-room to the kitchen, which leads to the scullery and back door, and took her place in the high chair and sat in receipt of custom with the jar and half a dozen cups of various shapes and sizes before her. Mrs. Mace brought two children, old Miss Pratte, Mrs. Garbole, Mrs. Sprue and Mrs. Argent came in search of health.

Mrs. Wospottle, having considered their symptoms, gave them a dose out of the jar at prices varying from threepence for children to sixpence for adults.

Them "yarbs," she declared, had been gathered under a full moon on Midsummer Night, "time th' fairies was playin' round me thick as peas in a pod an' not on'y fairies. I see mons'rous gre't owd beasts, too. I got to use me words o' power to 'em, they was that mischieful." She had recovered her poise.

"I ouldn't goo back to that wood along o' Mat, agen," she said to the nearly empty jar, when the last client had gone and she had bolted the scullery door, "not f'r five gowden suverins. I'll goo be meself to-morrer morning time folks is about."

To walk down the lanes to Bellropes in the bright light of a June morning was a simple matter enough. Mrs. Wospottle, treading the familiar path, fed her basket with carefully chosen leaves and flowers; she had some slight knowledge of herbs, sufficient at least to keep her away from the dangerous ones.

All went well until she entered South Ride and then for a moment her heart stood still as she found herself face to face with the monster of two nights before. Happily her heart recovered swiftly, she walked up to the creature with a curiosity free from alarm. It was, indeed, a very outsize in cows, but was made of varnished pasteboard, with legs a little above the ground; a carrier tricycle took the place of "innards."

Never in her life had the Wise Woman seen such a "contraption," and she was so intent on its study that she received a second shock when a small, smiling, sandy-haired man, apparently its owner, stood by her side.

"A clever thing, don't you think?" he said.

"Happen you'll tell me what it's all about." demanded Mrs. Wospottle, sternly.

"Bird photography," he answered, cheerfully. "Birds aren't scared by cows."

"Ain't they now," remarked the Wise Woman.

"The other evening," continued the affable little man, "I came down here just before ten o'clock and got a flashlight photo of the horned owl. There's a camera in my cow's head."

"I never heerd o' sech a thing, all me born days," declared Mrs. Wospottle, firmly, "that dedn't oughter be allowed. If that skeered respectable folk you'd find a peck o' trouble."

"The only respectable people about woods after dark are gamekeepers," countered the little man, "and the keeper here helped me to colour this and to arrange the swivel head and fix the flashlight. Would you like to see?"

"Happen I should," the Wise Woman admitted and with the turn of a couple of buttons the little man decapitated the cow.

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Boy Mat sat at tea in the cottage of the Wise Woman.

"You dedn't wanter be so fritted th' other night," she remarked, "I should ha' purtected ye."

"I worn't fritted about meself," replied the lad; "I'd seen the cardboard cow afore; they keep it in the cart bay. But with all th' little people playin' on the grass I was afeard it'd do some of 'em a mischief. I dussn't call out; did they'd ha' went off. I wish you could ha' seen 'em."

Mrs. Wospottle was about to declare positively that she had seen everything, but the words would not come. There was a truthful simplicity about Boy Mat; it suggested that he might see things, if only with the vision of a disordered mind; things invisible for all time to her. She was bitterly conscious of her own failure.

"Could ye larn me, Boy Mat," she asked, with sudden, rare humility.

He shook his head. "I couldn't ha' taught meself," he replied, slowly; "that come to me. *But I only see them whiles.*"

The words came to her with a painfully familiar ring; she knew he was speaking the truth.

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

Still in darkest Africa, Elizabeth, the pert cockney maid, is tiring of her exalted place as chief priestess to a mysterious native tribe's Ju-Ju when she finds that the dark girls are really not so slow as they look

BY FLORENCE KILPATRICK

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT WILKINSON

HENRY sat on the verandah, in the native-made rocker, smoking the native-grown tobacco and contemplated the natural beauties of the Sacred Valley which stretched before him. The air was balmy; the sun gave the vivid, tropical flowers an even brighter hue; the myriad hum of insects and the song of many birds filled the air.

What an earthly paradise, this would be, he meditated, but for the fear of some sinister fate which the chief of the Mtangulizi might even now be preparing for them. For the moment, however, these fears were decidedly in the background in Henry's thoughts. He even felt in a gay, holiday mood, he hummed a fragment from "The Gondoliers." "Take a pair of sparkling eyes, Ti-ti-ti-ti-ti-tum-tum. . . ." To add to the contentment of the moment, a native girl appeared carrying a tray, on which stood a goblet and a tall jug of wine.

"Shall I pour it out, Mister?" she inquired.

"Er . . . thanks," said Henry.

She set the tray down and, with a tinkle of bracelets and a rustling of her silken garments, ministered to his needs. Utamu wore silk garments, instead of the customary white linen uniform of the serving maidens, because she was privileged, being selected by Rusty Brown to teach the older children to learn English. She had picked up the easy slang which he so confidently termed English more rapidly than any of the other native women, being unusually intelligent. Her quick ear had even caught the nasal intonation peculiar to Rusty's speech. It jarred on Henry when he put a remark to her, to hear her laconic,

"Okay."

"Why take so much trouble to learn English all the wrong way, Utamu?" he demanded, a little testily.

She turned enormous liquid eyes on him with a puzzled gaze.

"Say, you're bats, ain't you? I speak English okay. The boss says so, and I reckon he oughta know."

Henry shook his head. "Your English is wrong. Okay isn't a real word. Neither is it correct to speak of anyone being bats."

Her face fell. "Then I ain't learning the nippers the proper lingo?"

"Certainly not."

"You've said a mouthful. I kinda reckoned from the foist that you and the boss spoke different. Say, I'd be tickled to death if you'd give me a few lessons."

Henry lifted his head, pleased with the idea. Here was something to do that might take his mind from the anxieties of his present position.

"I shall be delighted, Utamu."

"Bully for me. Can I start in right now?"

"If you wish. I have nothing to do."

Henry had, indeed, nothing to do. Only to stretch at his ease, bask in the sunshine, sip the heady native wine and consider the soft curves of Utamu's rounded arms as they rested on the table, the liquid depths of her eyes as they turned on him with intent gaze.

That he should observe Utamu's curves was in itself astonishing. The average Scotsman is a dependable husband. Rarely does he philander, matrimony being for him a straight, narrow path, from which his feet seldom stray in search of amorous adventure.

Such a Scotsman was Henry. Ten years previously he had placed a ring on Netta's left hand, to the accompaniment of the usual vows of undying fidelity. From that moment Woman, in concrete form, was represented to his mind as Netta and Netta only. Even now he believed that his interest in Utamu was detached. He found himself questioning the origin of her race and why the Mtangulizi should be so comparatively fair-skinned, their features so straight and fine.

During the ensuing lesson, he concentrated steadily on grammar and syntax. But when it was concluded, Utamu filled his glass and prettily suggested that in return for his efforts, she would play for him. She departed, returning soon after with a native stringed instrument. With the easy, graceful movements that distinguished the Mtangulizi women, she sank down by his side. Her fingers plucked at the strings and she broke into a haunting melody.

The native music had a plaintive quality, at once moving and seductive. It played on the emotions, so that as he listened, Henry found himself thinking of the past . . . and half-forgotten hopes and ambitions. The play that he had never found time to finish, but—should he ultimately finish it—would sweep him to fame and glory. Romance, too. The memory of that little girl with the violet eyes and flaxen curls (Netta was a brunette), whom he had loved in secret, met every day on his way to business, but never dared to address, in those bashful days of his adolescence. But supposing he had been able to make her acquaintance, supposing that he had married her instead of . . . here, however, he pulled up his thoughts with a jerk.

Do not blame Henry. All over the country there are good, solid, reliable husbands, whose thoughts are prone to stray from time to time—perhaps in the spring, or when the wireless gives an unusually touching rendering of "The Blue Danube" waltz.

And so Utamu continued to play and Henry to dream, not wholly unconscious that Utamu's head was now resting against his knee. This rendered her position more comfortable for playing, but Elizabeth, suddenly arriving on the scene with a message for Henry, did not wholly appreciate this. She bridled and drew back, shocked and resentful. Well! The master, of all people!

"The larst one on earth I'd ever picture larking about with a bit o' skirt," she meditated, darkly. It just went to show you that men were all alike. There was nothing to choose between them. She gave a loud cough.

"Excuse me, sir. . . . I 'ope I ain't interrupting the music," she said, pointedly.

The sight of Elizabeth recalled him to earth and the thought of immediate difficulties. He repressed a sigh.

"What is it, Elizabeth?"

"The chief wants to speak to you in the big orl. Mr. Megan and Rusty's with 'im. He's got some dirty work on foot, I shouldn't wonder."

"Are we all to be in at this conference."

"No, sir. Seems it's for men only. I'd like to know wot is goin' on."

"Well, we shall soon know." Henry rose. He smiled at Utamu. "When would you like another lesson?"

"Soon. To-day . . . if that's okay——"

"Now, Utamu, what did I tell you?"

"If that's all right by you."

"You seem anxious to learn."

"Sure. You teach me fine. You're swell."

Misunderstanding, Elizabeth tossed her head and retired. She knew when she was in the way, all right. But that sort of thing oughtn't to be allowed to go on. Him with such a good wife, too. One of the best . . . even if she *did* think that veal chops should be fried in breadcrumbs instead of batter. For the moment her thoughts were deflected from the problem of the chief's intentions, as she considered Henry's apparent backsliding.

"I think I know a way to stop it," she decided, at last. "W'y, yes, I got one of my good ideers."

Meanwhile, Henry presented himself in what he

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termed the "conference chamber" of the chief, to find Rusty Brown and Megan already present with him. Since the attempt of the party to escape from the Sacred Valley, he had kept in closer touch with them and not left them to their own devices, as at first. His manner, however, was increasingly urbane. When that disastrous "escape" through the tunnel merely led them back to the Sacred Valley, he had greeted them with the outward joy of a parent welcoming long-lost children. He had even feted them and gently chided Elizabeth for taking such a comparatively poor selection of precious stones with her. He begged her to accept a parure of emeralds which, he declared, were twenty times the value of those she had selected before that ill-fated departure.

"An' I don't quite know whether 'e's doin' a good deed or a narsty trick," Elizabeth had commented at the time, puzzled as to the workings of the oriental mind.

The chief now rose, gave Henry a ceremonial bow and indicated a seat by his side.

"Sit right there," he said, affably. "I been talking to my buddy, here, Rusty Brown, and he says you don't make blood sacrifices to Ju-Jus in your country."

"We don't have any sacrificial ceremony, nor do we have Ju-Jus, Chief."

"Well, say, that don't sound sense to me. But I've learnt a whole lot from Rusty Brown and I reckon what he says goes."

Henry and Megan exchanged joyous glances, scarcely able to credit what they had heard. The fear of the forthcoming grim, sacrificial ceremony in the Ju-Ju Temple was seldom absent from their thoughts.

"Only I ain't quite made up my mind," added the chief.

There was a tense pause, then Henry rose to his feet and began to address the chief. He spoke against the barbarism of sacrificial ceremonies, the heathenism of making obeisance to idols, the grave necessity for educating the people under his rule to enlightened ideas, which meant progress.

In his youth, Henry had been the shining light of a debating society and had gained considerable practice in expressing his views verbally. How little had he guessed that he might one day need his eloquence for the cause of saving his life. The chief listened in silence and appeared to be impressed. Then he remarked,

"But Rusty Brown tells me that in free countries folks all gotta vote."

"That's true—the voice of the people——"

"Well, if the chiefs don't have the real say, you cain't blame the chiefs if things go wrong. But look here, I'll put it to the vote. Our folk shall be told all you been saying and then some. Now is that on the square?"

"Absolutely."

"That's fine. And I'd like you to know that I'm with you in all you've been saying. Only I'll be tickled to death to see the way our folk vote."

Megan and Henry left the conference feeling heartened.

"It's a chance," said Henry.

"And a respite," replied Megan. "The people being educated to vote—why, that all gives us time. As long as we have time I don't give up hope."

"Nor I. I feel that we shall get away, or that a rescue party will reach us. . . ."

There was, indeed, some quality in the very atmosphere of Thahabu which engendered optimism. The exquisite climate, the life of indolent luxury, the smiling faces of the good-looking and good-tempered natives, invaded the senses. No wonder Rusty Brown had declared that, having found what he called an earthly paradise, he had no ntention of leaving it.

With what Henry fondly believed to be the respite vhich the chief's decision had granted, came a new ense of adventure. He began to see the Sacred Valley from another angle, to meditate on the possibility of gathering material to write a book, on his return to civilisation. He decided to study the characteristics of the natives more closely.

Utamu, particularly, was an excellent subject for observation. She was quick, intelligent and talked readily. She professed the greatest eagerness for the lessons in English which Henry conducted.

"You are so wise and so wonderful," she would say, looking at him with languid, liquid eyes. "I guess I learn quicker with you than with the Boss."

Henry tingled with pleasure. It was a long time since a woman had told him he was wonderful—fully ten years in fact, and he responded to the compliment.

In her turn, Utamu endeavoured to teach Henry to play on the native stringed instrument. He drew from it strange, agonising sounds which Netta referred to as "that horrible row," but Utamu declared that his progress was "wonderful."

Gradually a marked change came over Henry. His manner became gay, even at times verging on the frolicsome; he constantly hummed amorous ditties from Gilbert and Sullivan. . . . He was so assiduous in giving lessons to Utamu that before long her diction was almost as correct as his.

Elizabeth, noting this gentle dalliance with growing concern, was puzzled that Netta did not observe it. She dropped hints which fell on stony ground; perhaps because Netta was far too absorbed in anxieties concerning their future fate. She listened with an abstracted air to Elizabeth's comments on the vagaries of the male mind.

"With men you never know where you 'ave them, 'm," she would say. "W'y you got to keep an eye on the best and steadiest of them; they might break out any time."

This reference to man's inconstancy, as though it were a sort of rash, merely drew a tolerant smile from Netta.

"I suppose so, Elizabeth."

"As for these 'ere native hussies, w'y they'd snatch a man from under your very nose."

"I think the native girls are beautiful, Elizabeth, and so gentle and sweet in their ways."

"You reely think that, 'm?"

"Why, of course."

"That settles it," thought Elizabeth. "If she carn't see, then it ain't my place to speak outright. But I've done with talkin'. . . . I'm going to act now."

For the first time Elizabeth found there was an advantage in being the owner of the Sacred Ju-Ju; she was accorded such reverence by the entire tribe that her word was law.

Accordingly, she repaired to the great hall, which adjoined her own apartments, seated herself with as much dignity as possible on a broad, low divan covered with leopard skins, and ordered Utamu to appear before her.

(*please turn over*)

Utamu arrived at once and, to Elizabeth's secret satisfaction, made a low obeisance before her.

"How can I serve you, madame?"

Elizabeth decided to come straight to the point. "Seems to me you're gettin' a bit fresh with Mr. Warrington, my girl."

Utamu raised her large, liquid eyes in profound astonishment. "Fresh . . . that word means new, or, also, something that is pure."

"No, it don't—not in this case," snapped Elizabeth. "Listen to me. In our country, when a man marries, he sticks to the same woman orl his life."

Utamu looked even more astonished. "He is allowed but one wife?"

"Yes. That's the lor."

"But he can love other maidens when he wish?"

"Certainly not," declared Elizabeth, looking scandalised.

"But supposing after years he grow to hate his wife?"

"That doesn't make any difference," said Elizabeth, firmly. "Marriage 'as its ups an' downs, but once married you've got to stick to each other, see?"

"Yours is a sad, sad country," sighed Utamu, shaking her sleek head. "No man is ever known to love any other woman but his wife?"

"Well, if they don't get on too well together, he can put her away," said Elizabeth, grudgingly. "That is, if he's got the right reasons."

"He can put her away?"

"Never you mind about that, my girl. I sent for you to tell you to stop orl this nonsense with Mr. Warrington; this playin' on the banjo to 'im, rollin' your eyes and wot not. If you were in ole England he'd tell you to go about your bizness, but everythinks crazy in this country. Now, listen, you don't want me to make it 'ot for you, do you?"

"'ot?" Utamu looked pardonably bewildered.

"Yes. H-o-t, 'ot. Becos as it happens, wot I says 'ere, goes. You just be'ave yourself. Or else you'll be sorry. That's orl. Now, 'op it."

Utamu withdrew from the audience feeling decidedly puzzled. She decided to refer to Henry who was always able to explain things so clearly.

She attired herself in a new silk robe and put a fresh garland of roses on her head. She scattered on herself subtle perfume, made from the flowers of the frangipani, and presented herself before him.

"I come to ask a favour," she said.

"You want more lessons, Utamu?"

"Not about your language, but about the strange customs of your country; is it true that you can take only one wife at a time?"

"Quite true."

"But your laws cannot prevent your loving another—if the heart so advises?"

"The dictates of one's heart often do go against the law, Utamu."

She smiled radiantly at that and glided up to him. "I am so glad about that, because I love you; and your law does not forbid you to say you love me, too." She slid her arms about his neck; he was conscious of the subtle perfume of the frangipani, the scent of the roses in her garland . . . of the soft curves of her clinging form and his senses reeled.

Only the strain of his long line of somewhat austere Scottish forbears—which included three Presbyterian ministers and one lay preacher—recalled him to a reluctant sense of duty. Nor, indeed, was he wholly recalled until he had warmly returned Utamu's embrace. Then gently, but firmly, he disengaged himself from her clinging arms.

"This is madness," he said. "We must forget this ever happened . . . it is all wrong."

"Wrong, because you have a wife; that is what you think. Then will you not put her away?"

Henry made a movement of recoil. "You must not even speak of such a thing . . . Utamu . . . it will be better if we do not see each other much in future. I think I must have been mad to . . . to . . ."

"But you have not done anything wrong."

"No, not yet. I mean I—I—have been allowing myself to drift—but it must end—before—before it is too late."

On these dramatic words he turned and left her. Utamu watched him stride across the sun-splashed courtyard and disappear along the path bordered by the flowering jackaranda trees. She was not in the least dismayed by his abrupt departure. Her lips parted in a smile; she stood for some time lost in thought, then she, too, hurried away as if bent on some urgent errand.

For some days following this incident, Henry was relieved—if also a little piqued—to observe that Utamu seemed to be avoiding him. Then one afternoon, as he was sitting idling and dreaming on the verandah of Rusty's bungalow, she approached him. He observed at once that there was something unusual in her bearing. Her face was glowing with some inward excitement.

"It is done," she said, a little breathlessly, her face radiant. "I have had the courage that failed you; and now we can both be happy."

"Courage? What are you talking about, Utamu?"

"I know you love me. And if you belonged to my people that would be sufficient. We could be happy together. But the laws of your own tribe say that you must put your wife away before you can openly love another. So I have done this for you."

Henry stared at her, puzzled and bewildered. "I don't understand. What have you done?"

"I have put her away—that means in our tongue, *Kifo*, or death. We now belong to each other."

A feeling swept over Henry as of icy water being poured down his spine, his scalp prickled and he had an overwhelming desire to be violently sick.

Seeing the change in his expression, Utamu looked concerned.

"You are not pleased that I do all this for you. You think I have done wrong?" She approached him to wind sinuous arms about him. He flung her away, roughly.

"What have you done; tell me at once?" He seized her by the shoulders and shook her.

"But you are being cruel. I did this for your happiness——"

"Tell me what it is you have done."

"But it is nothing violent. I give her wine to drink in which I have mingled the *snmu*; it has no taste nor colour. I take it from the roots of the *maua* that grow on the mountain-side. Soon she will sleep and sleep and sleep. And never again will she awaken——"

He waited to hear no more. A few moments later, Elizabeth, sunning herself in the courtyard before her apartments was puzzled to see Henry careering along the winding, adjacent path in wild, erratic leaps and bounds. She jumped up in consternation.

"Looks as though the marster's gone potty," she decided. "A touch of the sun I shouldn't wonder."

She ran to him in alarm; in a few breathless sentences he jerked out his story. Elizabeth's ready mind was not slow to grasp the essential details.

"It's true—that native 'ussy did bring some wine to the missus, about 'arf an hour ago. She sed she felt sleepy arfter it and went to lie down."

Without exchanging another word they dashed together to Netta's room. Netta, reclining amongst silken cushions, feeling curiously languid, was startled out of her stupor as the curtains were flung aside and they precipitated themselves into the apartment.

"Don't go to sleep, 'm; you've bin poisoned," panted Elizabeth. "You gotta be sick, 'm, or it might be orl up with you."

So accustomed had Netta become to sudden shocks and alarms, since their ill-fated arrival in Thahabu, that she took this announcement with almost stoical calm.

"The wine was drugged?"

"That's right, 'm." Looking at Henry, who now seemed on the verge of collapse, Elizabeth said, sternly. "Don't you give way now, sir. You walk 'er up an' down while I get somethink to get the poison orf her stummick."

"But how are we to know what emetic to give?" began Henry, wildly.

"Soap an' water's the best—the worst I mean," said Elizabeth, promptly. "If that won't turn 'er over, nothink will."

"It sounds dreadful," moaned Netta.

"Not arf so bad as it'll taste," thought Elizabeth, as she hurried to prepare the mixture. Now, the native soap was a preparation of coconut oil decomposed by an addition of the salt of potassium. Its rancid odour was combatted by the addition of frangipani perfume; but undoubtedly this could do nothing to improve the flavour. And when Elizabeth arrived with a glass of the foaming preparation, Netta, naturally enough, recoiled at the sight of it.

"I've put a good 'ead to it," said Elizabeth. "It orter do the trick. Now, 'm, come along, drink it orf or it may be too late. Just you shut your eyes and think it's a glarss o' beer."

Unfortunately, Netta's imagination was not equal to such a strain being put upon it. She sipped from the glass, then moaned that she would rather die than finish the contents. Whereupon Henry became so wildly distraught that to soothe him she tossed off the whole of the nauseating draught.

"Well, 'm, unless you've got a stummick like an 'orse, *that* should make you 'eave," said Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was right. It proved that Netta's stomach had none of the staying powers attributed to the horse.

And as Henry held his wife's head during the ensuing violent reactions, he meditated sadly on the folly of any form of dalliance.

"What I can't understand," said Netta, somewhat later, when she had partially recovered, "is the reason for Utamu wanting to poison me."

Henry lifted his head. There was stern resolve in the angle of his chin, the glint in his eye. The austere Scottish strain in him—particularly the part that belonged to the three Presbyterian ministers and the lay preacher—impelled him to scourge his soul by open confession. At the very moment that he opened his lips, he met Elizabeth's gaze. She then went through a rapid performance in mime, shaking her head, raising her finger in warning and then placing the finger on her lips.

"I can tell you wot it was, 'm," she broke in, talking very rapidly. "That there wine was meant for me. I 'ad to speak sharply to that young woman the other day an' she' got a grudge against me.' She wants takin' down a peg, that's orl. Settin' 'erself up above the other native girls, just becos she's able to teach the kids 'ere, and 'ad a few lessons from the Marster. I'd say she's too big for 'er boots—that is, if she wore any. But she'll be paid out for this. I can punish 'er, seein' that my words lor in this place now."

"And how do you intend to punish her, Elizabeth?"

"Well, 'm, some people get what's comin' to them by punishin' themselves, so to speak." Elizabeth's gaze was directed witheringly on Henry as she spoke. "But with Utamu, we won't leave anythink to charnce. Seein' it's you that's 'ad to suffer over the bizness, wot about you choosin' wot's to be done with 'er?"

"I don't want to be vindictive, Elizabeth, but"—Netta paused and shuddered violently at the recollection of her recent ordeal—"when I think of that dreadful concoction I had to swallow—I shall never forget it as long as I live; the girl ought to be punished for making me suffer like that."

"W'y, that's given me an ideer!" Elizabeth clapped her hands together and began to laugh. "We'll give 'er a taste o' your medicine."

"You—you don't mean the poison?"

"No. I mean the soap an' water. She shall drink it before our eyes and"—here she shot a significant glance at Henry—"she won't 'ave Marster to 'old her 'ead when she begins to feel queer.

"And now," she added, triumphantly, turning back her flowing sleeves, "I'li go an' put a good lather on the soap an' water. When Utamu's finished wot I'll 'ave waitin' for 'er—well, I don't think we shall have any trouble with 'er in future!"

NEXT WEEK :
The Master Stroke

THE FLYING YORKSHIREMAN

"If Faith can move mountains, what's to prevent me from flying?" says Sam Small, the Yorkshireman. He puts his theories into practice—and soars into the blue!

Read this story by **ERIC KNIGHT**

NEXT WEEK

Continuing

COCKNEY IN THE COUNTRY

BY RALPH MICHAELIS

ILLUSTRATED BY BERTRAM PRANCE

"Angela, let's wait another five years and see how we feel

A single rear button is precarious for any man

Despite every effort, we still found ourselves in possession of half an acre of the finest and most variegated crop of weeds in the county. We hacked our way through high couch grass and nettles of three distinct types.

There were two kinds of bindweed with roots that stretched far beyond the reach of spade or fork, buttercups and dandelions, chickweed and a hundred others, whose names I do not know, though I do know what we called them.

There is only one implement capable of dealing with such a situation, in the first case—and that is a scythe.

But to let a Cockney loose in the jungle with a scythe can only lead to bloodshed—usually his own.

That was where Bill came in; for Bill was the only man in the village who was not occupied either in his own garden or in anyone elses' on Saturday afternoons—and in Buckshaw the unemployment problem is unknown.

Falling for my blandishments and the supplementary beer money, Bill turned up soon after the public houses closed for the afternoon and worked steadily until they opened again in the evening. A man of simple tastes, beer was Bill's only hobby; and he did not allow work to interfere with it.

The scythe he brought with him looked as if it might have been one of the original pair used on Boadicea's chariot, having descended to Bill by way of Jack Cade's rebellion and the Wars of the Roses.

After an hour's work in my garden, Bill's scythe looked as if it had been through an aerial bombardment as well.

For beneath the undergrowth was hidden such a hoard of broken bottles and jars and crockery, pots and pans, discarded household utensils of all sorts, spring mattresses, bedsteads and perambulators, as would bring fame to any budding archæologist two or three thousand years hence.

Discarding the war-scarred scythe, he returned to the attack with a forked stick and a hedging or reaping-hook.

The hook is a weapon with which Bill is most familiar; because he is a hedger and ditcher by trade.

Turning a corner in the lane you will come suddenly on Bill's stern sticking out into the road, his head immersed in the hedge or ditch, a forked stick gripped in his left hand, while he plies the hook with his right.

And you will be shocked to see that Bill's trousers depend on one solitary rear button for their suspension.

Now a single rear button is precarious enough for any man; but for one who puts as much strain on it as a hedger and ditcher, the risk is positively frightful.

Bill's Button is one of the best-known features of Buckshaw; in its modest little way, perhaps one of the Minor Wonders of the world. For never within living memory in Buckshaw has Bill been known to sport more than a single rear brace button, and not once has that button been known to let Bill down.

But, in spite of his idiosyncrasies, Bill is a worker.

He is not exactly a streak of lightning; but in the words of his foreman he "always keeps his head down to it," than which no man can hope for greater praise.

If he happened to be working in the neighbourhood, he would look in for an odd half hour or so of an evening, before opening time, but whether he came on Saturday or any other day, Bill always arrived prepared as for a seige. He had a quart bottle of beer in each pocket and the unexpended portion of the week's rations in an old army haversack.

For wherever Bill goes, his larder goes with him.

He is taking no chances with rats and mice, or other marauders, though I do not suppose he really distrusts his human neighbours, because nobody ever locks a door at Buckshaw and nobody ever steals anything.

It is the sheer dread of collapsing at his work from malnutrition that prompts Bill to carry all his food with him.

He sets out for work on a Monday morning, his haversack bulging with loaves of bread, pounds of butter and cheese and bacon and dozens of large "crunchy" onions, with which he flavours every meal.

"But why carry all that weight around with you?" I have asked him. "Why not cut yourself a supply of sandwiches in the morning and leave the rest at home?"

He regarded me with the tolerant eye of one who has got used to being asked the same silly question and has, consequently, learned to suffer fools gladly. "I reckons that if you cuts a bit off and then leaves it, the strength goes *out* of your food. You can't *fancy* it like you can when it's fresh; and it does you no *good*," he told me, patiently. "But when you've got it all with you, you can cut a bit off when you *fancies* it; and it does you *good*. It ain't good to go *without* a thing when you *fancies* it."

To let a Cockney loose in the jungle with a scythe can only lead to bloodshed

Thus unconsciously applying the theories of Dr. Freud and the so-called modern school of psychology, Bill turns his life into a perpetual picnic. But just as Bill's work was not allowed to interfere with his hobby, so were neither his dietetics nor his hobby permitted to intrude on his work.

Having cleared the jungle, he attacked the hedge that was sprawling ten feet high, a tangled mass of elm, hawthorn, holly and bramble, interlaced with ivy and stinging nettle.

Then he strewed the brushwood out from the hedge over the grass and nettle cutting and burnt the whole lot where it lay; leaving only the spaces under the fruit trees free.

When we raked over the ashes, the ground was clear for digging and there was a dressing of wood ash fertiliser all ready on the surface.

The next job was to trench it, grubbing out all the bindweed and nettle and buttercup and couch grass roots and burying the rest for manure and moisture.

We had just started on this when Bill handed in his resignation.

"I'm afraid I shan't be able to come any more on Saturdays," he said.

"Why ever not?" I asked. "It fills in the time nicely during closing hours, doesn't it?"

"It does that," he agreed; "but I'm thinking of getting married."

I tried to control my astonishment; for Bill was sixty if he were a day and was the one and only confirmed bachelor in the village. I asked the name of the lucky girl.

"Well, it's an old story," explained Bill, "for it's nigh thirty years ago since she and me *first* met; and we was *keeping company* for *twelve* years. Then we had a bit of a quarrel. She wanted to *rush* me into *marrying* her and I wanted her to *wait* until we got *better acquainted*. So she left the village and we never saw no more of each other.

"But last St. Valentine's Day she wrote and suggested we should meet again. She had come into a bit of money and some furniture and she wanted to *settle down*.

"Well, she come over here last Sunday and do you know," a husky note of sentiment came into his voice, "she looked just the same young girl as she was 30 years ago. Hasn't altered a bit.

"Still I kept my head. I wasn't going to be rushed into anything too sudden, like."

"Naturally, Bill," I sympathised, "marriage is not a thing to be undertaken lightly. It needs consideration."

"Well, she comes straight to the point. 'Why not make it up, and get married, Bill?' she says. 'I've got a nice little houseful of furniture I'll bring over, and I've got a few hundred pounds in the bank!'

"I says we don't want to rush a thing like this, Angela, let's wait another five years, and see how we feel then."

"She wouldn't have that, so I said, 'make it another three years then.'

"But she says, 'no, it's now or never, Bill.'

"That settled it, of course, and we're going to be churched in September."

"In that case," I said, "I should have thought you'd be glad to earn a bit extra."

"I'd like to," he replied, "only I've got to do my courting on Saturdays."

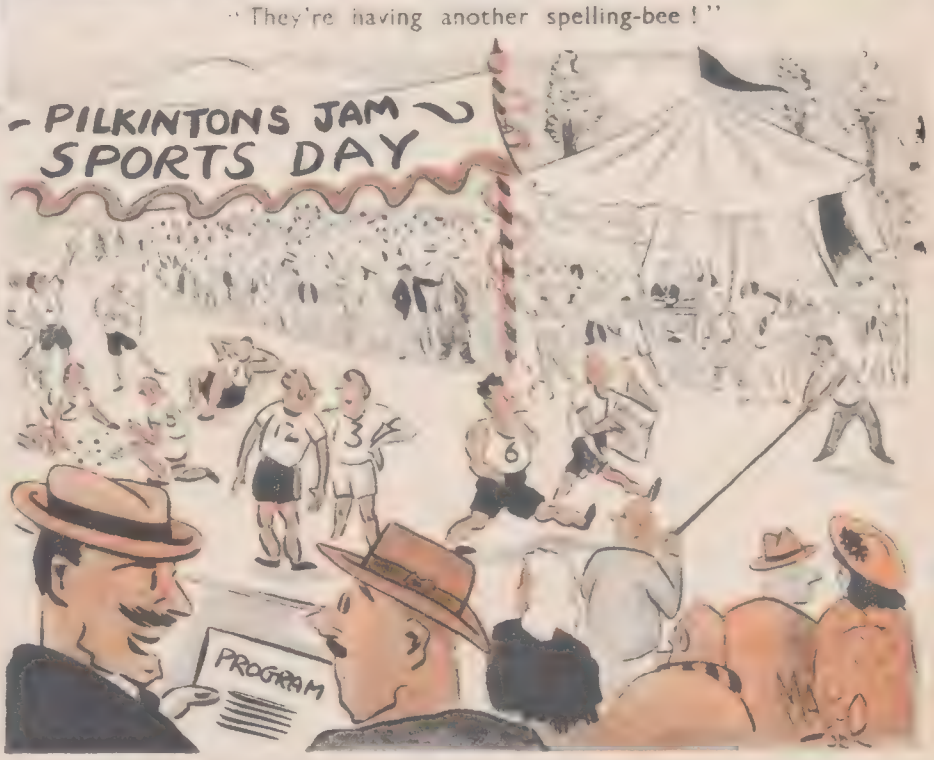
Laugh

The "PASSING SHOW

"It's only a crack in the wall, but it looked so good I had a frame built round it!"

"They're having another spelling-bee!"

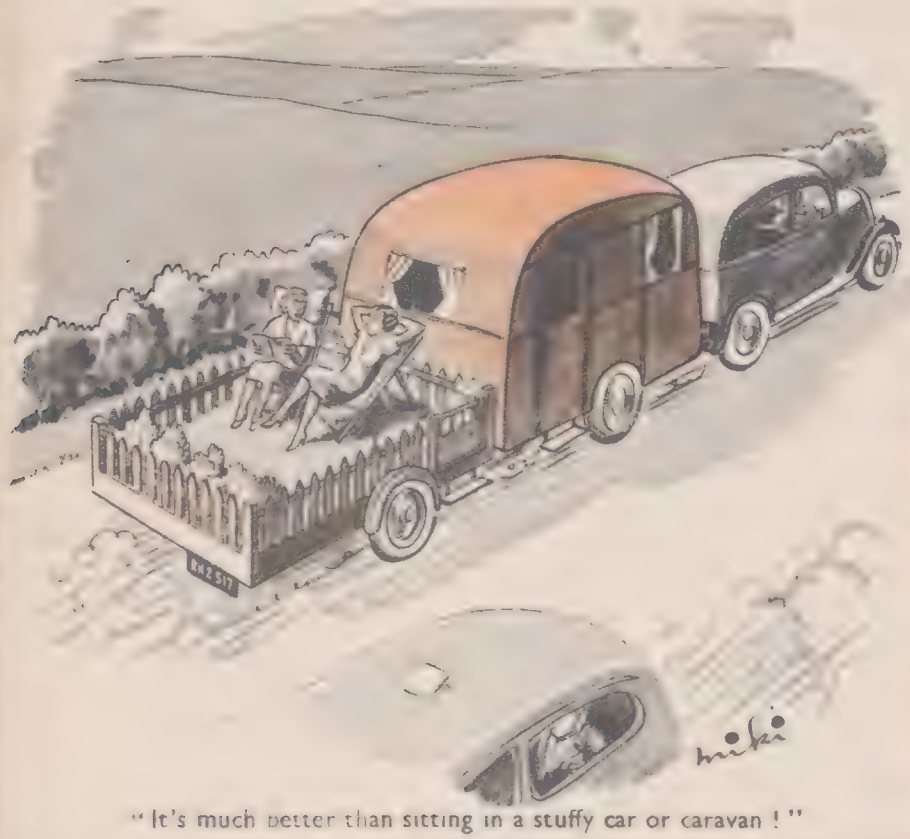
"I 'spect it's Nobby, sir, 'e's a bit of a cartoonist!"



"This is the hundred yards sprint for our errand boys!"

olker

W" Smile Section



"It's much better than sitting in a stuffy car or caravan!"

"There's someone in the gallery making a disturbance!"

"Good heavens—isn't this the holiday camping ground?"

"He must be a designer

A MAN CAUGHT

By A. C. BARRETT

LAUGH WITH THE WORLD

"Captain, where can we telephone to? Our fire-station is on fire."
Das Illustrierte Blatt, Frankfurt

"Mummy, was that traffic policeman once a baby?"

"Of course, dear."

"Mummy, mustn't a baby traffic policeman look funny."—*Die Grune Post, Berlin.*

"How long is it that you have been typing all your letters?"

"Since I became engaged. My fiancée is a handwriting expert."—*Marc Aurelio, Rome.*

"Well, Eric, what will you become when you grow up?"

"First of all a teacher to please mother, then a musician to satisfy dad, and then an airman to please myself."
—*Wroble na Dachu, Cracow.*

Maid: "A Mr. Brown called to see you whilst you were out, sir."

Smith: "What a good thing I was out."

Maid: "Just what Mr. Brown said, sir."
Kolnische Illustrierte, Cologne.

CLEAN SLATE

CAMEO STORY
BY
PETER FABRIZIUS

"I gave an Australian a punch on the jaw"

MR. WISEMAN was playing a game of golf, when Johnnie Black rushed towards him excitedly.

"Excuse me," began the latter, in a more polite tone of voice than he generally used, "I really must speak to you."

Mr. Wiseman was the best-natured man in the world. He was almost incapable of condemning anybody and people used him as a sort of moral magician who could put everything to right. However, he objected—as strongly as his nature would allow—to being disturbed in the middle of a game of golf.

"Is it important?" he growled.

Johnnie reflected a moment. "Well, in a way, yes," he drawled, finally. "You see, I want to ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage."

Wiseman swayed over his golf-stick. "What!" he stammered, indignantly. "You, a drunkard, a waster, a lothario, a brawler, a——"

"I see you know me," Johnnie cut him short, "and you know Mabel, too. Once she has got something into her head——"

"And so she's got you into her head?"

Johnnie nodded his head emphatically, certain of victory in advance. For Mabel, of all people, knew best how to turn her father's malleable nature to advantage.

"It's impossible!" persisted Wiseman, "I can't give my only child to a drunkard, to a ne'er-do——"

"I'll improve!"

"Ha, you and your improvements! A fine pair you'll make."

"I'll prove it to you."

"I'd like to know how!"

"All right," answered Johnnie, "I'll show you that I can be decent and respectable, if I try. But if I succeed, you must promise to forget my past and forgive me for all the scrapes I have got into. Everything that has happened up to this moment must be washed out and then I can start with a clear slate. Is that a deal?"

"But how could you prove this to me?" he said. "You know you couldn't live a respectable life for the space of a single week."

"I shall live for a whole month in a way which would do credit to the president of a world federation of temperance societies," Johnnie announced, solemnly.

"You promise that you won't drink for a whole month?"

"Not a drop!"

"And that you won't smoke more than five cigarettes a day?"

"I won't smoke a single one!"

Wiseman regarded his future son-in-law with a more friendly expression.

"And how about cards?"

"I won't even look at them!"

"And may I ask: What will you do in the evenings?"

"I shall spend them within the space of my own four walls."

"And the ladies will come and spend them there, too, what?"

"No member of the opposite sex will cross my threshold throughout this period, not even Mabel. I shan't even look at a woman. I shall live like a hermit in the wilderness."

"And you really expect me to believe all this?"

"I've told you already. I'll give you ample opportunity to keep a continual watch on everything I do."

"Well, I've got nothing against the idea. You seem to mean it honestly. You promise, then, that during the course of a whole month you won't play cards, nor touch any alcohol, nor get involved in any of your usual brawls and, above all, that you will lead a moderate existence?"

Johnnie nodded. "And you, for your part, promise that if I pass the test, you'll allow me to marry Mabel and will forget the whole of my stupid past?"

"Right you are! I know it's absurd, but I've got nothing against the idea. There's no harm in trying." Wiseman put his golf-stick aside and shook the young man by the hand. "When do you begin?"

"To-morrow!"

"Excellent. It's a deal! But I bet you any money you like that you won't keep it up for a month!"

"I bet I will," said Johnnie. Then bending confidentially towards his future father-in-law, he added: "You see, I've just been involved in a most unpleasant business. We were up all night drinking and playing poker. When I'm a bit tight I get rather pugnacious, you know. So I gave an Australian—who seems to be very well connected, confound him—a punch on the jaw and knocked a couple of his teeth out. I'm afraid the judge didn't see the joke this time . . . and I got one month's hard labour . . . beginning to-morrow."

SHORT SHORT STORY complete on this page of a kidnapped millionaire who wanted to become a dead loss

"Hell!" cried Dixie, dropping on one knee. "He's gone and died on us!"

TIME TO THINK

BY GEOFFREY WILLIAMSON

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD LAMPITT

OLD Mr. Castle's mind was full of business as he stepped hurriedly into his waiting limousine. He spared no glance for the chauffeur, who draped a rug gently about his knees, closed the door and hurried round to take his seat at the wheel. Indeed, it was not until they had been speeding through the night for twenty minutes or more that the millionaire came out of his reverie and, looking about him, became aware of a certain strangeness that he could not at first explain. Somehow the interior of his car seemed different, unfamiliar; yet it must surely be sheer imagination. The upholstery was the same; all the fittings were identical; whatever could have put such a stupid notion into his head?

Then he looked up suddenly and a gasp escaped his lips as his eyes fell upon the figure at the wheel. That was not Reeve! He had been accustomed to sitting behind his head chauffeur for so many years that he was familiar with every detail of his appearance, as viewed from the back seat. Quickly he reached forward and thrust his hand into one of the side pockets. That settled it. He knew that his spare spectacle case had been there that morning; now the pocket was empty.

Old Mr. Castle had amassed his millions chiefly because of the agility and swiftness of his mind. Now that he had been shaken out of his reflective mood, he needed no second thought to realise the significance of the situation. He had received many menacing letters of late, hinting at kidnapping and worse, unless he paid over formidable sums. Most of them he had dismissed lightly enough, for such missives had been common in his life. The thing that had been so often threatened, then, and at which he had always laughed, had happened to him at last. He had been kidnapped!

He had anticipated the possibility so often that now it had actually happened to him it had little terror for him. Had he been in America he might have felt differently about it; but this was England.

The best thing, he reflected, was to sit still and await developments. Nor had he very long to wait, the car turned off, presently, down a narrow lane and, after pursuing its way along a very bumpy surface for upwards of a mile, came to a halt before a large house that was shrouded in darkness.

Lights appeared at that moment, however, the door was thrown open and three burly figures came striding towards the car. Castle saw that each man had a pistol in his hand.

"It's Dixie, right on time," said one.

They were joined by the chauffeur, who was likewise armed, and the rear door of the limousine was flung open without ceremony.

"Don't make any fuss, boss, or we'll plug you!" rapped out the leader. "You're in good hands and if you do what you're told, no harm will come to you!"

The millionaire suffered himself to be led into the house, and soon he had been installed in an upper room that had evidently been prepared for his reception. It was sparsely furnished with a divan, a rug, a wash-stand and a small table and chair. The window was shuttered and barred; the door was equipped with massive bolts and two locks.

"Just sit down and make yourself easy," said Corrigan, a square-jowled fellow with a wicked leer on his features. "Dixie will be up with your medicine in a second—here he is. . . ."

The pseudo-chauffeur, his tunic now unbuttoned, came in at that instant with a tumbler and a bottle of brandy. The leader took them and, pouring out some of the spirit, handed it to Castle.

"Is this doctored?" asked the millionaire.

His captors laughed heartily.

"You're a wise guy, all right," acknowledged Corrigan. 'No, this ain't doped—see here. . . ."

He tilted the bottle and took several gulps.

Reassured, Castle sipped from the glass and was glad indeed for the stimulating effect of the spirit.

"Now suppose we talk business?" asked Corrigan. "We're holding you for something worth while, see? Here's the note already for your signature. It's to your secretary, instructing him to get together fifty thousand pounds in notes, pronto. It tells him just where to leave it for us, see?"

"Nothing doing," Castle said, simply. "Sorry, but I'm afraid you've picked a bad subject for your kidnapping game. You see . . . I . . ."

His voice trailed away suddenly; he swayed from side to side, uttered a moan and sank to the floor.

"Hell!" cried Dixie, dropping on one knee. "He's gone and died on us!"

"Mind he's not foxing!" warned Corrigan, dropping down beside him. "Keep him covered you guys while Dixie and I'll get him up on the divan."

The unconscious millionaire was laid out none too gently upon the divan; Corrigan slipped his tie, and opening his collar and shirt front, thrust his hand inside.

"He's all right," he pronounced, "his heart's going strongly enough, anyway. Slip me the hooch."

He poured some brandy between Castle's lips and the millionaire struggled up into a sitting posture.

"I'm . . . I'm all right now . . ." he murmured and then sank back again and closed his eyes.

"Good for you, boss," retorted Corrigan, grimly. "Cover him up, boys, and make him comfy. I guess he'll feel more like talking business in the morning."

In the morning, Castle was certainly brighter, but he declined to talk business with his captors.

"Give me time to think," he asked, faintly.

"Well, make it snappy!" ordered Corrigan. "All you've got to do is to sign your name; we'll do the rest. After all, what we're asking is a fleabite to you. We can't afford to hang around. I expect there's a hell of a hue-and-cry for you by now. Hullo! Here's Bud with the papers. Let's see what they say. Hell! What's this!"

His face became contorted in a look of unspeakable surprise.

"Say, fellows, listen to this," he read.

"'Grave fears for kidnapped millionaire. May die unless found quickly. Doctor's grave warning. Herman B. Castle, the multi-millionaire, is the victim of an audacious kidnapping plot. He failed to return home at the usual hour early last evening and his chauffeur, who should have called to pick him up at his doctor's house, was later discovered drugged in his limousine in a lane near Edgware. He has not yet recovered sufficiently for questioning.

"'Meanwhile, the gravest fears are entertained for Mr. Castle, who was spirited away in a car that was apparently a replica of his own. Dr. Forster, a specialist who has been attending the millionaire lately, makes the startling revelation that Mr. Castle was undergoing special serum treatment for an affliction which may possibly prove fatal if the injections that he has received three times daily are long interrupted. The serum, Anolin, is brought from Vienna by air in weekly consignments.'"

Corrigan stopped reading and looked up grimly.

"See boss?" he queried. "You'd better make it snappy and sign on the dotted line."

Castle laughed strangely. "I know all about that," he replied, simply, "and I'm not afraid to die. I've had a full life and a long one and it will be considerable satisfaction to me to know that I am a dead loss to you if I die on your hands. No one will pay fifty thousand pounds for my corpse!"

Corrigan's face was a study. He looked abashed.

"We ain't going to let you die on us, don't you worry! Dixie, Bud! This guy's got to be kept alive at any cost. We've got to get this doctor and get him quickly. It'll be easy enough. All we've got to do is to call him by phone to come to an urgent case in some quiet road near his surgery, then we can pick him up, hustle him into our car and bring him out here. Once that's fixed, we'll soon see about the ransom. Sparks can stay behind in the meantime and get his diet list figured out. I see they've got one in the paper here as long as me arm!"

"Okay, boss," answered the man named Sparks, who had been studying the newspaper. "It looks mighty troublesome, but I reckon I can fix it."

"That's swell! Expect us back in two hours."

As it happened, the sound of the returning car reached Sparks' ear well within the two-hour limit which Corrigan had so confidently stipulated.

The prisoner, who had scarcely stirred during that time, was now in a deep slumber. So Sparks hurried down the stair to greet his confederates. But as he threw open the front door, he started back with an angry curse, throwing up his hands in response to a curt command. Thunderstruck, he gazed around a menacing semi-circle of armed strangers, in whose midst stood Corrigan, handcuffed and glowering.

"What the—?" he began, but the leader, a white-haired, pink-faced man of slight build, cut him short with "Where's your prisoner? Take us to him."

"Here I am, doctor," called a cheery voice from the stairs, and the next moment Castle came running lightly down to join the group, his face wreathed in smiles and all traces of his fatigue and weakness vanished. "It worked, doctor!" he said, wringing the white-haired man's hand.

"Rather," was the reply. "The moment I heard the Yankee voice requesting my services for an urgent case, I knew what to expect. The six C.I.D. men followed me as arranged and the three gangsters were so taken by surprise that they just crumpled up.

"We left two in custody and made the other bring us here and, well—here we are!"

"Say," cut in the chagrined Corrigan, turning to the millionaire, "let's get this straight. Do you mean to tell me that—that story in the papers about you being a dying man was just bunk?"

"Correct!" answered the millionaire. "It was a plan I arranged with my friend here as a counter-kidnapping measure from the moment your gang's first threatening letter arrived. You might like to know, too, that there's no such serum as Anolin, and my friend here is not even a medical man—he's a doctor of music!"

JUDAS

The silent, red-bearded road-mender, with whom few men made friends, had to play his solitary part in this drama of a courageous betrayal

BY L. PATRICK GREENE

ILLUSTRATED BY S. TRESILIAN

HIS mother's husband, Tom Nightall, the roadman of Steynlea, named him, and if there is anything in the old adage about "giving a dog an ill name," then on Tom must be put the blame for the man his wife's first-born became. But after his one bitterly sardonic jest at the christening, Tom Nightall never again referred to the fact that he was fully aware that the child was not his. He proved a kindly husband and an indulgent father ; his treatment of Judas differed in no degree from that he showed to any one of the numerous brood Mary, his wife, subsequently bore him.

Yet the name and its connotation of reproach, which should, perhaps, have been the mother's, fell upon the head of the boy. It set him apart and served to keep fresh in the minds of the villagers the circumstances of its bestowal.

As soon as he was old enough to leave the confines of the cottage garden, Judas Nightall was made conscious of the stigma attached to his name and, though his mother called him "Judey," his playmates refused to accept that diminutive. For a short period, because of his flaming red hair, they called him "Ginger" and later, when he went to school, they experimented with clumsy and blasphemous scriptural hyphenates. But these phases were short lived; no nickname could so well express cruel contempt as his given name.

The teachers at the village school rarely called upon him to recite or read; indeed, it was only at a certain period of the year and at the hour of the Scripture lesson, that they were really fully aware of him; and then they would send him on errands in a kindly attempt to spare him the meaning glances and sniggers of the other boys as they read about the Great Betrayal.

He left school at the age of fourteen, a big, shambling, loose-limbed boy; almost an outcast from the society which had never really accepted him. His shy silence was mistaken for sulkiness. He walked with head bent, his eyes down-cast—"shifty-eyed" the villagers called him—but if he rarely looked into the faces of people it was because he was afraid to read what might be showing in their eyes.

His first employment was as delivery boy for the village grocer. When he had grown into his strength he gravitated to farm work and from that to helping old Tom make, mend and tidy the Sussex lanes which radiated from the village green. When old Tom died, Judas carried on the work alone.

At this time he was forty years of age; he was a big, powerfully built man, but carried himself so badly that he appeared to be hunch-backed. His long face was covered with a thick beard which matched the flaming red of his hair. His eyes were of a strange hazel blue; and yet they sometimes rivalled the blueness of an April sky, and sometimes they seemed to be a dull, lifeless grey-slate colour. It was as if they were affected by the alchemy of his emotions. His large, aquiline nose shadowed full red lips; his ears were small and set close to his well-shaped head.

He had never been known to do an unkind or dishonest deed and many villagers—had they been equally honest, equally kind—could have testified to his unquestioning generosity. Yet he had no friends; he could hardly be said to have acquaintances. None gave him a friendly greeting when they passed him at his work. It was as if they did not see him. It is even doubtful if his mother, whose sole support he now was, really knew him. She was content in the knowledge that Judas was, in his inarticulate way, devoted to her. And he was content with the day's routine, which was only occasionally broken by a visit to the *Fox and Hounds*. But——

"That Judas Nightall fair gives me the creeps," the landlord often said. "The way 'e sneaks in 'ere and sits down wi'out a word to nobody, fair beats all ! Ar ! An' more often 'n not 'ee'll sit there the best part o' an hour afore some o' the chaps'll tumble to 'im bein' amongst them, like. An' there 'e sits a-listenin' an' a-spyin', so 'ee can carry tales. That's wot *I* reckon Judas Nightall's little game is !"

The landlord was not a malicious man. He was only echoing the opinion of his regular and more popular customers. It was an opinion which was grossly unjust to the big, silent man, but it persisted and strengthened with repetition.

Judas was not slow to notice that men dropped their voices to a whisper and looked at him with angry contempt as soon as they were conscious of his presence, but he placed the blame upon himself—not upon them—and he went to the *Fox and Hounds* even less frequently. Instead, he filled in the hours between cessation of work and bed time by reading; he read anything and everything which came to his hand and, having a retentive memory, his brain was a weird encyclopaedia of irrelevant information.

His reading suggested another means of escape from the solitude which surrounded him, for it was an article in a magazine which prompted him to develop his power of observation. He had his mother's word for it that he had always been "a rare old 'and for noticin' things," and as a result of the article he developed that faculty to an amazing degree. It proved to be something to his mother's entertainment as well as his own, for now, when the evening meal was over, he would regale her with a story of the day's happenings. At first, his narration was little more than a skeleton list of things seen, told in a sequence of short sentences, each beginning with "I saw a . . ."

But gradually his skeleton list took on flesh and substance; it was as if he nightly played a recording of all that his senses—colour, scent, sound, touch and taste—had noted during the day.

Nothing, no matter how trivial, escaped him ; a hawthorn bursting into bloom and the tyre marks of a car which had stood over-long on a grass verge; the song of a bird and the ominous drone of a high soaring 'plane; the smell of thyme and the mushroom-suggestive stench of a motor-cycle exhaust; the scarcely discernible heart-beats of a bird he had released from a poacher's snare and the jangling jar to his muscles as his pick bit into a metalled road; the gentle softness of the downs, veiled by the mist of rain or shimmering in the heat of an August day; the acrid tang of his cold, unsweetened tea and the vinegary flavour of the mustard on a sandwich given to him by a lonely picknicker.

As his power of observation increased with constant use, more and more details clothed his narrative.

And all these things, all that he had observed, were filed away in the storehouse of his brain.

Had Joe Laney known all this, he might have hesitated about stopping his car to inquire the way of the red-headed, full-bearded roadman. He was feeling lonely and not a little tired, having driven from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Southampton, after a night spent in profitable, though somewhat hazardous work. Then, too, Laney always found some amusement in exchanging pleasantries with simple rustics—their kindly courtesy fed his ego—and when Nightall came up to the car, touched his hat with becoming humility and asked : "What was it 'ee said, sur," Laney was puffed up with a feeling of self-importance and lost consciousness of his weak, puny body.

"Am I on the right road for London, my good man?" he asked, in what he termed his "lardy-dah" voice and used chiefly in order to impress susceptible housemaids.

"That you be, sur," Judas Nightall replied. "An' it be a good road, too. I reckon you wun't be long a-gettin' there. Your car looks a fast 'un."

"She is," Laney said, enthusiastically, forgetting his accent for the moment. "She'll do eighty like a bloomin' bird an' 'old the road. Lumme, she's a bloomin' wonder !"

"Gor !" Judas Nightall said, slowly. "Eighty miles an hour—w'y, that's most like flying, sur. But it bain't safe, be it, to drive that fast on these twisty, narrer roads?"

"Safe enough, my man," Laney said, recovering his affected accent. "Safe as houses. I don't believe I could turn her over if I tried."

"I were thinkin', sur," Judas replied, mildly, "on the folkses wot might be walkin' along the road 'round the next corner, sur."

"Oh, them !" Laney exclaimed, contemptuously. "I look after myself and let other people look after themselves."

"Mebbe you'm got the right on it, sur," Judas Nightall agreed.

"You bet your boots I have, my man ! Well, I must be toddlin' along. Got an important business engagement this morning that'll put thousands in me pocket. I keep to this road, eh? 'Ere, have a smoke. Bet you've never 'ad one like that before."

With a lordly, patronising air, he handed Judas a cigar, let in his clutch and drove on.

Judas Nightall stared after him until he rounded a curve; then he looked thoughtfully at the cigar, smelt it and put it in his pocket.

"That beats all, that does," he muttered, as he went back to his stone pile. "Doubtless 'e were havin' a game wi' me. Ar, him wi' his 'My good man-in' !' How-be-it, I suppose I got to make

Caney shouted curses and threats, pleas for mercy and promises of great rewards. Under cover of the din he made, a third man entered the cave

allowances for 'im bein' a city chap. Outside o' that 'e were oncommon pleasant an' easy to talk wi'. Nor it bain't seemly in me to go lookin' fer offence where none, I take it, were intended."

For the rest of that day Judas Nightall was vaguely disturbed by thoughts of his encounter with the sharp-featured little man in the big sports car, but not until that night was he able to formulate the reasons for his mental disturbance.

"Dang my eyes!" he exclaimed, explosively, hitting the table with his closed fist. "I did ought to ha' thought on that afore."

"Thought on what, Judey?" his mother asked, looking up from her mending.

"W'y, 'bout that little chap in the big, green two-seater I was tellin' 'ee about; 'im wot give me that cigar an' asked the road to Lunnon. 'Course," he added, defending his memory, "I *did* think on it. It were at the back o' my mind all the time, like. It were only that I 'adn't got it properly graded out, like. You see . . ."

He rambled on, trying, in clumsy words and phrases, to explain the delicate processes of human thought. His mother heard him to the end and then, for her curiosity was sharpened by delay, asked with a touch of acerbity :—

"An' wot is it you've thought on that's got you all of a flummox, lad?"

"W'y, that chap! There were no need for 'im to ask me the way. 'E's been up an' down at least a dozen times to my knowledge. An' not alus in that car, neither. A month ago, more or less—I *could* name the day if it were needed, like—'e were drivin' a grey coloured 'un. No, dang my eyes It were the *same* car, only painted different. I mind now a dent in the near hind mudguard an' a hub cap——"

"That bain't nothin' to get excited about, surely? A gentleman can 'ave his car painted o'er wi'out——"

"Ar! But that bain't all," Judas interrupted. "'E's changed his licence number as well as his colour. Now—'ow do you 'count f'r that?"

"Mebbe 'e's just paid his new tax," his mother said. She was a little disappointed, thinking he was creating a mountain of mystery out of a mole-hill of fact.

Judas Nightall shook his head, knowing that could not be the explanation.

"'Sides which," he concluded, almost truculently, "'e bain't no gentleman. Gor! I've killed rats wot were better featured nor him."

"'Andsome is as 'andsome does,' Judey," his mother said, softly. "'E spoke you fair an' kind, didn't 'e?"

"Aye," Judas agreed. "'Cept for his 'my good

(*please turn over*)

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man-ing.' I come nigh to lettin' 'im 'ave a bit o' my mind about that."

His mother looked up at him sharply. This note of aggression in her son's voice was something new. She could not know that his brief talk with Laney had given Judas a feeling of superiority; there had been something about the man which he had instinctively despised.

"That would ha' been a churl's way, Judey," she said, decisively. "Whatever's come o'er 'ee? It bain't your nature to return soft words wi' 'ard 'uns. It's been too much 'tother way round, more's the pity. An' it's 'ard words you'm mostly had. How-some-ever, that bain't your fault. No! The fault were mine. Ar, an' Tom's! 'E didn't ought to 'ave named you like 'e did," she continued, swiftly, knowing she had been skating over thin ice. "As fer this chap wot give 'ee a pleasant word, mebbe 'e took a likin' to 'ee, lad. Mebbe 'e'll 'elp you to a job away from the village where there's so many to point a finger o' scorn at 'ee. Mebbe 'e'll give 'ee a job that'll take 'ee travellin' to foreign parts an'——"

Judas Nightall laughed.

"That bain't possible. Nor would I go anyw'ere an' leave 'ee all alone."

"You'm a good lad, Judey. But I'll be leavin' 'ee one o' these days soon. The doctor were tellin' me so last Friday. 'E said if I 'ad this, that an' t'other I'd last a good bit longer. But to wot end? 'Sides which, the things 'e said I needed 'ud cost a mort o' money, an' it bain't for folkses like us to hanker arter 'em."

She said this quite simply. Certainly there was no self-pity in her voice; no whining for sympathy.

Judas Nightall nodded, apparently taking her news as matter-of-factly as it had been given. Then he rose and reached for his cap.

"Where be 'ee goin', Judey?" she asked.

"Down to the pub to get 'ee a bottle o' port wine."

"That 'ud be a rare treat, Judey. But sit 'ee down, lad. It's long past closin' time. Sit 'ee down an' smoke that cigar the Lunnon chap give 'ee. It looks a good 'un an' it's been dear knows 'ow long since I last smelled good cigar smoke; not since I left service, anyway . . ."

The scent of cigar smoke was frequently in the Nightall cottage after that, for it seemed that Joe Laney's "business" required him to make frequent trips from London to the south coast and he never failed to stop for a chat with Judas, sometimes going out of his way to look for the stolid, almost witless-appearing roadman. In due course something approximating a friendship—certainly it was more than an acquaintanceship—developed between the two men. But it was a queer friendship, based on the strangest of foundations.

Joe Laney liked the feeling of superiority the roadman gave him; he liked to be able to boast and patronise. He liked to pose as a rich city magnate, preoccupied with matters of high finance and to gain credit for open-handed generosity; and this generosity did not stop at cigars!

For his part, Judas Nightall came to look forward to his meetings with the rat-faced, little man in the big sports car and quite cheerfully paid to him the lip homage on which he seemed to thrive.

"'E fair relishes 'surs' an' 'at-touchin' an' the like," Judas explained to his mother. "I reckon it makes 'im feel more of a man, as you might say. Well, if that be wot 'e wants, that's wot I'm a-goin' to give 'im. It don't do me no 'arm. Besides which, it's little enough pay to gi' 'im in return for all the things 'e gives me. Ar! It's a fact 'e's oncommon generous. Now do 'ee 'ave another glass o' that port wine 'e give me yesterday. 'Twill set 'ee up fine an' put some colour in your cheeks, like."

Such gifts, all of which Judas Nightall accepted for his mother's sake, would alone have been sufficient to win his tolerance of Joe Laney; but an even greater incentive was the fact that he felt Laney's superior.

At each meeting, Joe Laney lengthened his halt and the time came when he deliberately drove up and down a maze of Sussex lanes looking for the red-bearded roadman. Finding him about to eat his frugal midday meal, Joe triumphantly produced a well-stocked luncheon basket and the two feasted regally, sitting on a moss-grown bank shaded by a flowering hedge.

"I say, look 'ere," Joe said, after the meal. "I like you. You're a good sort, for a yokel. An' I'm sick of calling you 'you.' There ain't no need, neither, for you to keep callin' me 'sir'—leastways, not when we're alone together like this. You call me 'Joe'—see?"

"That don't seem exactly seemly, sur," Judas replied slowly. "How'd it do if I were to call you 'Mister Joe?'"

Joe Laney nodded, feeling well pleased that the roadman had not taken advantage of his momentary weakness.

"All right," he agreed. "Now what's your name?"

"Nightall—Judas Nightall—Mister Joe," the roadman said, slowly, and he stiffened to meet the laugh of derision he had learned to expect his name to evoke. When none came he exhaled his breath in a long sigh of relief and, strangely, his inner contempt for Joe Laney increased.

Apart from this gesture, neither man made an attempt to get on terms of better understanding of each other's background, though Laney, confident that he was dealing with a slow-witted rustic, was a little less guarded in his speech than he would otherwise have been.

Even so, he only hinted at the vast wealth any man who had the wit and nerve could make in certain enterprises. He conveyed, by winks and nudges, that these enterprises were not exactly within the law. And when such hints met with a no greater response from Judas Nightall than, "Well, I never! Fancy that, Mister Joe!" he enlarged, rather daringly, on the exploits of a man he knew who made a good thing of smuggling certain commodities. But, though he let Judas infer that *he* was the hero of the story, he never mentioned what the commodities were.

Judas Nightall accepted the fact that Joe Laney was a smuggler with placid equanimity. After all, Judas was not far removed from the age when the gentlemen ran their kegs of smuggled brandy across the downs, and his only immediate reaction was a decision to exercise caution in the manner of his future meetings with Joe Laney; he did not want the local people to suspect that he was consorting with a smuggler. Also, he was a little more diffident about accepting gift and carried them home under cover of darkness.

One day Joe said:

"I suppose there's plenty of places near here where a man could hide?"

"That depends, Mister Joe," Judas replied, slowly. "W'y, be 'ee plannin, to play 'ide an' seek wi' somebody?"

Joe laughed.

"I might. You never can tell."

Judas Nightall shook his head.

"Ar! You'm rich people get up to all manner o' games. W'y, last year it were, there was a party gi' at one o' the big houses, an' one day they all went on a scavenge hunt, as they called it. Fair put upon I were, too. Fust one car an' then another, full o' young uns, come a-careerin' down my roads a-lookin' for me. An' when they found me they wanted a hair from my beard." Judas' voice trembled with indignation at the memory. "I sent 'em off wi' a flea in their ears, I can tell 'ee."

"I bet you did, Judas. But 'ow about it? Do you know any place where a man could 'ide up for a bit if he had to? I mean, with all this empty country, I should think it 'ud be easy for a man to lose himself if he wanted to."

Judas laughed, pitying the ignorance of the city man.

"It bain't so empty as it looks, Mister Joe. Still an' all, a man could hide if 'e didn't 'ave to eat an' drink. But not in any o' the spinneys—leastways, it wouldn't be easy for a chap wot didn't know his way about. 'Course, now, *I* could 'ide an' nobody 'ud find me. W'y, I'll lay that if you gave me five minutes start I'd 'ide where you couldn't find me, though you searched the rest o' the day. An' I wouldn't move, neither, arter the five minutes were up."

"You're joking, Judas."

"No, I bain't. Wot's more, I could keep in 'iding as long as I was a mind to—alus provided, mind 'ee, that I'd got somebody I could trust to get grub to me."

Joe Laney stood up and looked around. Save for a small copse a field away, he could see no possible hiding place.

"You're joking," he said, again, in disappointed tones.

"No, I bain't. There's a big old cave not moren' a couple o' hundred yards from where you'm standin' this self same minute," Judas said. "'Course, most folks round here know about it an'——"

"Hell!" Joe Laney exclaimed. "A place like that wouldn't be any good What's the good of a hidin'-place a lot of people know about? That 'ud be one of the first places they'd look."

Judas Nightall laughed softly.

"They'd search, Mister Joe, but they'd never find. You see, I know a way in that bain't generally known. W'y, I doubt if anybody 'cept me knows about it. An' it leads to a little cave which is shut off from the big 'un by a fall o' earth. Anyway, that's where I'd hide, if I had to, an' I warrant nobody 'ud find me. I'll show it to 'ee one o' these days. But w'y are you interested, Mister Joe?"

"Oh, I ain't. Not really, Judas. Only—well, I'm havin' a bit of trouble with my wife, and I was thinking it might teach her a lesson if I disappeared for a bit, one of these days. However, can't you show me where that cave is, now?"

"W'y surely, Mister Joe. Now look

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'ee. Do 'ee see that stumpy old oak? There—that 'un wi' the gorse growin' all around it?"

Joe Laney nodded.

"Well, that old oak stump is a hollow 'un. If 'ee were to climb up into that an' let yourself down careful like—it's a drop o' about twelve feet—you'd find yourself in a tunnel, like. An' that tunnel—it's a dark, twisty-windy 'un—'ud lead 'ee to this cave I'm talking on. An' there, providin' 'ee 'ad a store o' grub an' drink an' blankets an' such, you could stay 'idden for I don't know 'ow long. Ar, an' be as safe an' snug as if 'ee were in your own 'ome." He added, as Joe Laney rose and started to clamber over the stile: "Where be 'ee agoin' to?"

"To have a look at that cave, Judas. I might want to use it some day. You never know."

"Then," Judas Nightall said, slowly, "you'd best not go to it now in broad daylight, wi, I dunno how many folks about. How long do 'ee think the cave 'ud be kept secret if 'ee went to it bull-'eaded, that way?"

Joe Laney looked sheepish.

"I never thought of that," he said. "Well—that just goes to show. Every man to his trade. You'd be lost up in London an' I'd soon make a mess of things down here." He looked at his watch. "Well, you must show me the cave one day, when it's safe. Now I've got to toddle along. Good day, Judas! I'll be seeing you again pretty soon. Here's a quid. You buy something for your mother with it."

The two men did not meet again for some considerable time, although Joe Laney used the roads cared for by Judas with even greater frequency. Most of his trips, however, were made at night; even when he drove that way in the daytime he went so fast that he could not have appeared as more than a blurred flash to any roadside observer. Also, he was driving a new car.

Laney was, at last, being crushed between the upper and nether mill-stones—by the police and by his associates. The former wanted him very badly indeed; at least, they would have wanted him had they known he was the man they wanted. And that knowledge could not much longer be held from them. As for Joe's associates—they were really his employers—they were suspicious of his loyalty,—knowing that his ultimate capture by the police was inevitable, they doubted his silence under questioning.

Of the two dangers threatening him, Joe Laney feared his associates the more, yet dared not go to the police for protection. And so he determined to make a break for freedom, planning with the cunning and courage of a cornered rat.

His questioning of Judas Nightall regarding a hiding-place had been a first, tentative step. He took the first opportunity thereafter of inspecting the cave, visiting it under cover of night's darkness. He found it even better than he had dared hope. He could remain in comparative comfort in that cave for months if need be—until the police had forgotten him and his associates had given him up for dead.

His first, secret visit was followed by others when he carried the supplies he judged necessary—tinned foods, a solid alcohol stove and its fuel, blankets, tobacco and liquor. Finally, he took Judas Nightall into his confidence—in part, at least—inventing a plausible excuse for wishing to hide away from the world. His relief at the roadman's easy acceptance of his story was partially shattered at the discovery that Judas has known of his secret visits to the cave.

"But don't 'ee worry about that, Mister Joe," Judas told him. "I knew wot 'ee were up to, 'cause I saw the marks o' your car in the mornin's, an' 'ccordingly I did a bit o' explorin', like. But nobody else knows on it; you may rest easy on that. W'y, by the time I'd been at work wi' my scraper there weren't no tyre marks or nothin' fer nobody to see.

"Ar! An' you'm got everything fixed proper. Only thing you'll be wantin' that you can't store, like, is water."

"I'm counting on you to get that to me, Judas. You'll be able to do it without nobody suspecting. An' you can bring me papers. I'll want to know—I'll want to read things."

Judas Nightall nodded.

"'Ow long do 'ee plan to be 'iding, Mister Joe?" he asked, slowly.

"That depends on a lot of things, Judas. But you'll help me, won't you? We've been friends, an' it'll mean money in your pocket."

Judas Nightall nodded thoughtfully as he gathered up his tools.

"You can count on me to do wot's right, Mister Joe. I'll be keepin' a look-out for 'ee. You wun't be able to go to earth wi'out me knowin' on it. An' now I got to be gettin' 'ome. 'Tis past my quittin' time, an' Ma—she frets if I'm late, like. 'Sides which, she'm keepin' badly these days. . . ."

That night a sequence of events rushed Joe Laney into unconsidered actions. It started in London, where he answered a snarling threat, in a water-side, rat-infested warehouse, with a shot from an automatic. The pressing of the trigger was no more than a muscular reaction to Joe's fear, and chance sped the bullet to its mark. For that killing Joe Laney deserved the thanks of justice. On the other hand, justice is jealous of its rights and has strenuous objections to being deprived of them. Even so, Joe's immediate fear was of the gang and he took to his heels.

By the time the dead body was discovered—and it is significant that its discoverers did not notify the police, but found for it a safe hiding-place on the muddy floor of the Thames—Joe was beyond the outskirts of London, heading south. Speed took him from the avengers, but not from his fear; that kept pace with him and urged him to take risks a cooler mind would have avoided.

Southward he sped. His headlights turned the road ahead into a white ribbon which his car devoured, leaving behind only darkness. And at last he crested the Sussex downs.

Presently he turned off the main road, taking a left-handed turn on two wheels. He was heading for the place where he would wreck the car, set it alight, and make across the fields for the cave.

And then disaster fell. Perhaps fatigue affected his judgment. For a moment, perhaps, his eyes closed, or it may have been that his headlights, shining on a grey stone wall, created the illusion that the road went straight ahead instead of making a hair-pin turn. Too late he realised his mistake. He made a desperate attempt to turn the car and check its speed, then ducked down quickly behind the steering column. The next moment there was an appalling crash, a flash of blinding light—then darkness.

From that darkness Joe Laney emerged almost immediately. Somehow, still dazed, he crawled from the wreck and sat down on a heap of stones near by. He was bruised and shaken. His face was cut; but that was all.

"Bli'me!" he muttered. "That's a bit o' luck for me."

He staggered to his feet and looked at the car. It was a total wreck. The bonnet was weighted with stones from the wall the impact had demolished. There was a smell of burning—flames licked up hungrily.

"It's better than I planned," Joe exclaimed. "I couldn't have crashed on purpose as good as this. And I ain't more than a quarter of a mile from the cave."

He waited for a few moments, until he was sure the car was well alight, then hurried down the lane. He turned at the sound of an explosion and chuckled at the sight of the blazing pyre.

"Too bad," he thought, "there ain't a body in the car for them to find." And he shivered, thinking how nearly his own body had been there to be cremated.

He stood there, hypnotised by the sight of the high-mounting flames, until he recalled, with a startled oath of dismay, that the flames were likely to attract other people—even at that hour and to that lonely spot. He continued his flight, the blaze of the car still in his eyes, and so he did not see, until it was almost upon him, the light of Police Constable Smart's bicycle.

His first impulse was to take to his heels, but the policeman's voice halted him, and he watched the officer dismount and come toward him with a heavy tread; to him, it was the tread of Fate.

Lights flashed within his mind—more blinding than the lights of the burning car. It seemed to him that the policeman floated toward him on a thick, red mist

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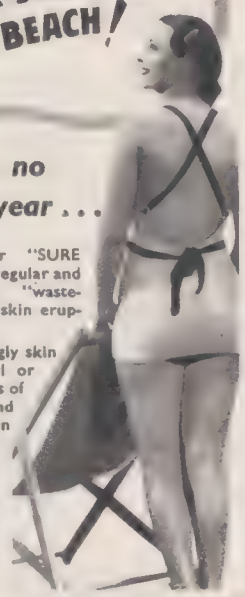

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and Joe Laney ceased to be a reasoning being. His automatic leaped to his hand and his animal-like shout of rage drowned the policeman's shocked protest.

Laney fired. He fired two more shots into the inert body which now littered the tidy lane. Then he fled, sobbing with rage and fear.

During the ensuing week Steynlea was the focal point of the nation's angry indignation, for it was within the parish bounds of that village Joe Laney had committed his callous crime. Search parties, directed by lynx-eyed men, scoured the downs looking for the murderer. But they found no trace of him and, concluding that he had escaped from the vicinity, the police concentrated their search on the criminal haunts of the big cities. They now knew the man they wanted and presently circulars appeared giving Joe Laney's description and offering a reward for his capture.

Several newspapers augmented this reward, making a total of £1,000 on Joe Laney's worthless head.

It was a good thing for Joe Laney's sanity that he knew nothing of this, or that an avenging member of the gang to which he had belonged, luckier in his investigations than the police, had uncovered his associations with the roadman. Such knowledge would reduce Laney to a jibbering maniac. As it was, he cowered in his underground burrow, starting at every sound, tortured by fear until only fear was left to him; every other sensation was numbed.

He ate, drank and slept with automaton-like regularity. Apart from that he was as one dead; yet lived to die again of fear at each new sound. His sleep was broken by nightmares from which he awakened in a sweat of terror; and his throat would feel as sore, his voice would be as hoarse, as one who had been shouting wildly and continuously—as indeed he had.

On the tenth day of Joe Laney's self-imprisonment, Judas Nightall visited the cave. Judas went openly, in broad daylight, and paid no heed to the man who thought he watched unseen from the cover of a hedgerow.

"Good old Judas!" Joe Laney babbled. "I knew you'd come! I knew you'd come! They won't get me now. You're a good pal. You'll look after me. Good old Judas!"

It seemed that the whisky he had been drinking suddenly took full hold of him. The arrival of Judas had, in part, removed the fear which had been the whisky's antidote and he babbled on drunkenly, laughing inanely as his legs refused to support him. He seemed unconscious of the roadman's silence and stern, uncompromising stare.

"I'd 'a' come afore," Judas at last said slowly, "but I been sick. This be the first time I been out since I saw 'ee last. Bronchitis, it were. Took me sudden like. An' Ma—she bain't well, neither. She needs to go up in the hills, 'way from the sea, the doctor says. So she will soon." He paused. Then:

"You 'adn't ought to have shot Constable Smart. Cruel murder, it were."

"I had to, Judas," Joe Laney whimpered. "He'd have got me if I hadn't. I had to. I——"

"It be all o' a piece wi' the rest o' your rottenness," Judas continued, heavily. "Ar! The papers ha' been full o' your doings. Less nor a rat, I count 'ee; but you'm worth a damn sight more'n any rat. And so, I come for 'ee fust chance I got. Come on!"

"Why? What do you mean? Where are we going? This place is good enough hiding-place for me, and I ain't going to leave it."

"You are. An' now. I'm going to give 'ee up to the police."

The words shocked Joe Laney to a measure of sobriety.

"You're joking, Judas!" he gasped. "You don't mean it. You wouldn't split on a pal like that." His voice changed to a snarl. "So that's the sort of pal you are? Give me up, would you? Why——"

He crouched tensely. In his hand was the automatic.

"You ain't going to split on me, Judas! Hell, Judas—that's a good name for you! I ought to have known better than to trust you. Well, you spoke too soon. You're going to stay here with me, alive or dead—I don't care which."

Judas Nightall looked at him contemptuously.

"You never were a pal of mine," he said, "an', in a way, I paid 'ee for all you give me." With a suddenness that was surprising in so big a man, he reached forward. His big hand closed in a vice-like grip about Laney's puny wrist. He twisted, and the automatic dropped to the ground.

"Come on!" he said again, as he stooped and pocketed the weapon.

Laney cursed and pleaded. He went down on his knees and clutched desperately at the big man's hands.

Judas Nightall looked down at him unmoved. Judas' face was pale from his recent sickness; a shaft of sunlight, finding its way through a crack in the roof, intensified the redness of his hair and beard.

Laney shouted curses and threats, pleas for mercy and promises of great rewards. Under cover of the din he made, a third man entered the cave. His appearance reduced Laney to the silence of defeat. His emotions had drained him, even, of fear.

Judas Nightall turned to face the newcomer and saw a hatchet-faced, thin-lipped man whose smile was a cruel leer.

"An' who might you be, mister?" he asked.

"A friend of Joe's. Just another friend of Joe's. But a better one than you. I don't intend to give him up to the police. And you won't, neither."

"There bain't no use you'm talkin', mister. I'm takin' 'im to the police so's 'e can get his proper come-uppance. Iffen you want to talk, you'd better come along."

His big hand closed on Laney's coat collar. He dragged the man to his feet.

"Come on," he said. "Out o' my way, mister. The law's wantin' this chap."

"So do I," the other snapped. The revolver in his hand menaced Nightall's middle. "Put up your hands!"

Judas Nightall obeyed, the palms of his hands brushing against the earthen roof.

Sure of himself and of his command of the situation, the other laughed. He was in no hurry. He would first kill the big, slow-witted yokel and then execute the gang's vengeance on Joe Laney. If, with the passing of time, the two dead bodies were discovered in the cave—why, the police could draw their own conclusions. And, whatever those conclusions might be, he would be beyond suspicion.

His eyes narrowed. His finger began to contract on the trigger of his revolver.

At that moment Judas threw the earth he had scraped from the roof into the other's face. It was sufficient to blind the man at the moment of firing, sufficient to make the muzzle of his weapon deflect a little.

The bullet pierced Judas Nightall's left shoulder, high up, and before another shot could be fired he had closed with the gangster. His left arm was practically useless. Even so, but for the weakening affect of his illness, he would have easily dealt with his opponent. As it was, the two men waged a grim struggle, and Joe watched with dumb despair. Whoever won—he lost.

At last, Judas succeeded in pinning his man down. His big right hand, closing about his throat, choked him into final subjection.

The affair was the sole topic of conversation that night at the *Fox and Hounds* and, after the men had discussed with satisfaction the arrest of Constable Smart's murderer, they spoke of the part Judas Nightall had played.

"Ar!" said the landlord, thinking to anticipate the opinion of his customers. "When all's said an' done, it were just the sort o' thing Judas Nightall *would* do. A regular 'Judas' trick, it were. Waited 'e did, 'til a reward were offered an' then betrayed his pal to the police."

"No. You'm got it wrong," old Tom Cross, the sexton, objected. "It's all o' a piece—as I 'eard parson say not a couple of hours ago—wi' givin' a dog a' ill name an' 'angin' 'im, to talk that way.

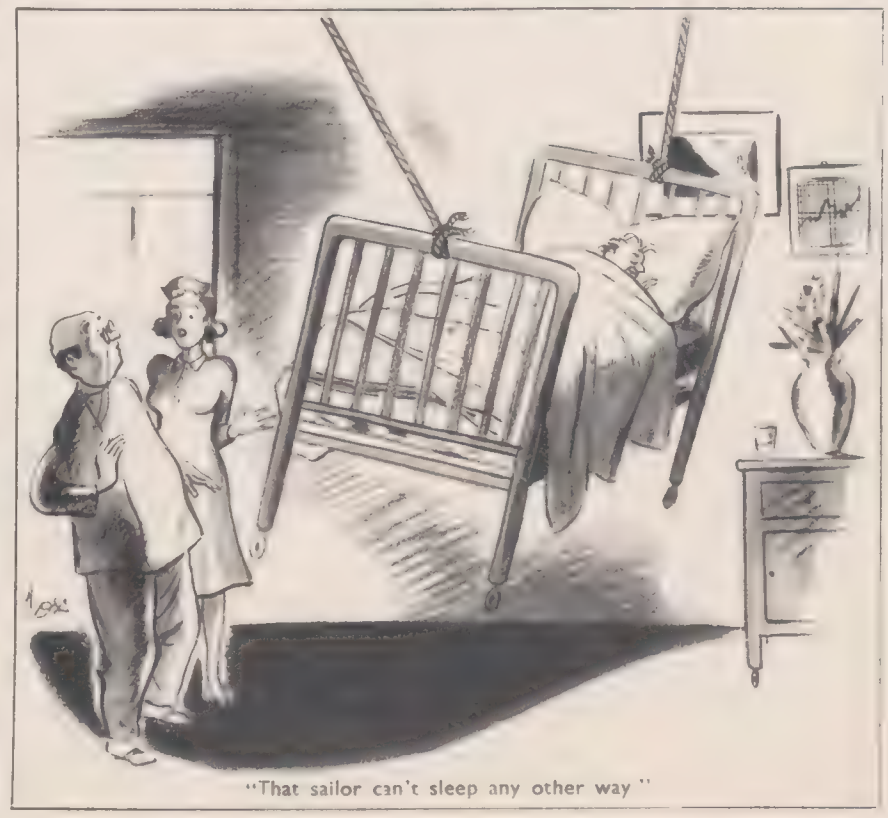
"In the fust place, Judas weren't al together sure in his mind, like, 'til he got out an' about to-day, that the chap 'e knew were the chap wanted for murder. An' 'e didn't know, neither, that the chap were 'iding in the cave wot he'd told him about. Furthermore, if it were, reckoning him to be a dangerous man as 'ad killed once an' wouldn't be above killin' again, Judas reckoned there'd be less likelihood o' bloodshed iffen 'e went an' got the chap himself. Leastways that's how he figured it out when 'e talked it over with parson this mornin'.

"So it weren't a case o' our Jude waitin' for a reward to be offered.

"As for him betrayin' his pal for money—Joe Laney were never a pal o' Jude's. Jude's own Ma told me 'e fair 'ated the rat o' a man an' only tolerated him for the stuff Laney gi' him for his Ma.

"And lastly," old Tom concluded triumphantly, "us all do know wot that other Judas did wi' the money 'e got for a reward. He took it back an' then went an' 'anged 'isself out o' shame. But do 'ee know wot *our* Judas be goin' to do wi' his reward money? That be summut else 'e talked over wi' the parson this mornin'. Wi' some on it 'e's goin' to see his Ma has all she wants for her comfort in the bit o' time left to her. The balance he'm goin' to hand over to the parson to 'old in trust, like, for the widder an' children o' Constable Smart."

This information was greeted with a murmured chorus of approval and men told each other that was the sort of thing "Jude" Nightall would do. And, as they raised their glasses and drank to his health, they did something more than that. They re-christened him and wiped the stigma of his "christening" name from their memories.



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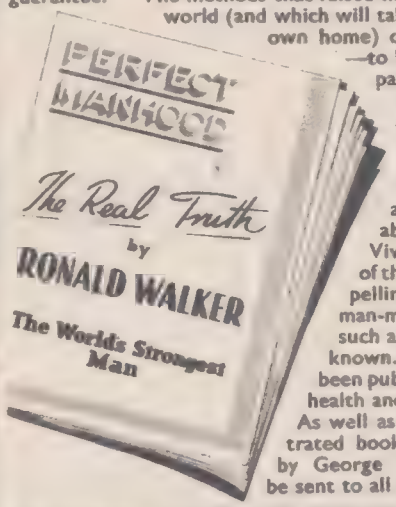

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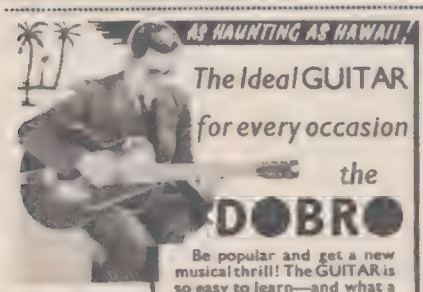

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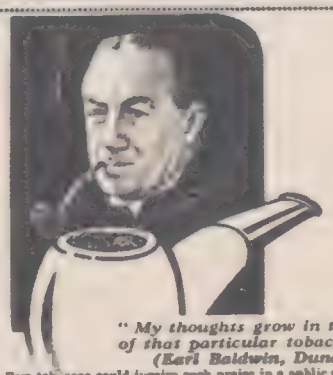

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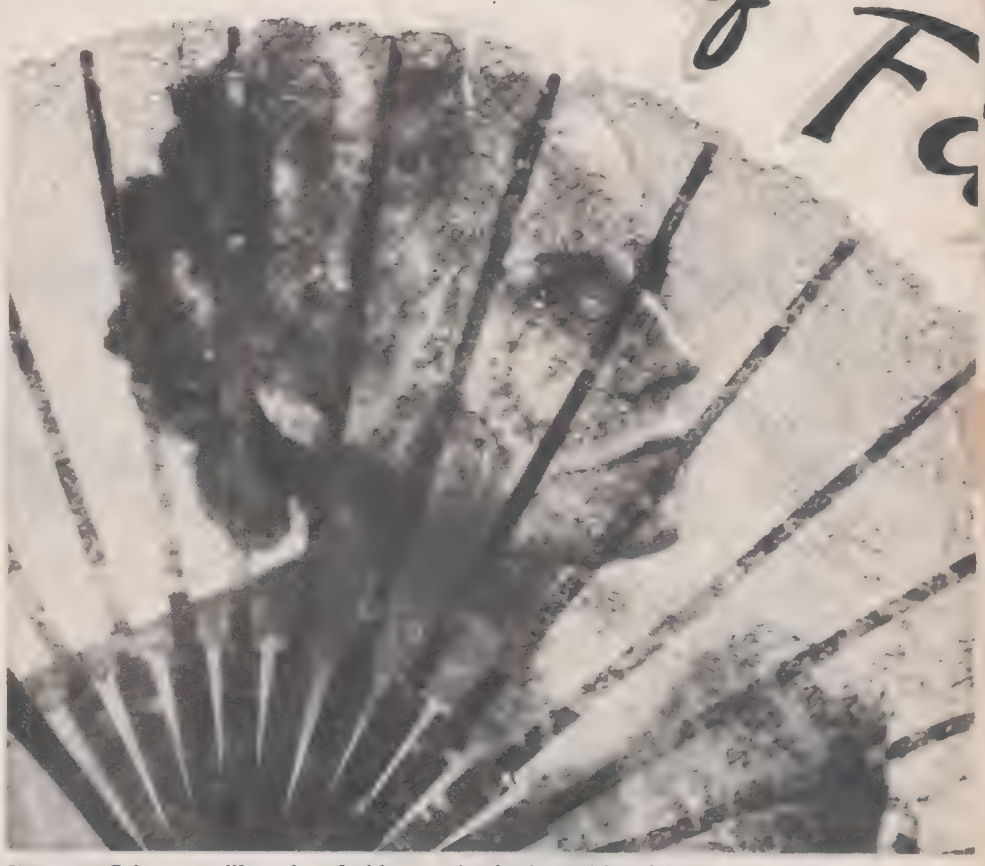


NO longer will we be afraid to go out alone after dark; no longer will be heard the cry of "Policeman, policeman, come and save me!" No longer will we have to learn ju-jitsu to protect ourselves from the attentions of ruffians sneaking up to us to snatch away our handbags.

No, we can now (just as our grandmothers did in their day) "pull" a fearsome-looking hatpin and jab it into any tough, giving him the fright of his life!

Still, long hatpins with ornamental heads are really "in" again. Thinking I could buy a couple of them for a few pence (for only a month or two ago I saw quite a number of them lying neglected in a tray of oddments in a jeweller's shop window) I trudged from jeweller to jeweller, pawnshop to pawnshop, asking for old-fashioned hatpins.

The reply was the same everywhere. "Oh, yes, we *had* dozens of them not so long ago, but we melted them all down. If you'd called before we'd have been happy to *give* them to you. Anything to be rid of the things. They were a positive danger lying about the shop. And now we've been asked a dozen times during the last week for them. Are those things *really* coming into fashion again?"

I assured each jeweller that "those things" were indeed in fashion again and, before I left one shop, I rooted round until I found an old Georgian silver comb, to put in my back hair, which I have at last had the courage to "put up" in the Edwardian way (or as my friends call it, "The-bathroom's-empty" style.)

I warned the jeweller not to melt away his stock of combs, for I've seen so many Edwardian heads about recently that combs and hatpins will soon become a necessity, not a fad.

★ This Edwardian trend in fashion is rather amusing. And attractive, too! The other evening I saw a girl, dancing, at the Savoy, in a black taffeta dress. It was made very simply, but with a full flowing skirt, and the bodice was boned so that it kept up without any visible means of support.

The girl had her hair brushed right up at the back with curls at the front, and the only ornament or colour she had introduced was one red rose in her hair and another on a piece of black velvet ribbon tied round her throat—dog-collar-wise.

The roses were not wired in any way. They were just as she might have picked them from her garden.

The girl looked so stunning that if you want to be taken home in a hansom cab you need only take a leaf out of her book!

★ I was visiting a friend in hospital, where she has just parted company with her tonsils. We had been chatting for some time when she said, "Now, Virginia I'll tell *you* something which will interest you—I've found the most marvellous face cream since I've been here." I thought it almost impossible for her to have made any good finds lying there in bed. But she certainly had, and she asked me to go and look at a pot of cream she had with her.

For twenty years this cream has been used in hospitals, to cleanse new-born infants' tender skins, so you can understand that it is essentially pure. It is not "dolled up" in any way, nor perfumed. This is a cream which was produced and tested for babies and has now been adopted by their mothers for their own complexions.

Besides being a skin cleanser it prevents and cures chaps and roughness. You just have to spread it on the face with gentle, firm, upward movements, the heat of the skin will cause the cream to liquefy, when it will penetrate deep into every pore and float out all impurities. After a minute or two it can be removed with a soft cloth or tissue.

And it is cheap—2s. for a large jar and 4s. for a huge tin containing a pound of the cream.

VIRGINIA HALL'S PAGE

If you want to know more, write to me, marking your envelopes "Hospital Cream," and I will be pleased to send you fuller particulars.

★ Here's a recipe for a summer sweet. Melt a pineapple jelly in the usual way. Beat up the yolks of two eggs with one and a half ounces of castor sugar. Add to this half a teaspoonful of vanilla essence.

Then add all this to the jelly. Beat up the whites of the eggs until they are stiff and then fold in with the other mixture. Put in mould and leave until quite cold.

Hawaiian cream is the name.

★ So often are we delayed at the last minute through having to change the contents of one handbag into another. Even when I've lots of time to spare I find it one of those hateful, fiddling little jobs; and somehow it's one that is always left to the very last moment.

Having changed from black to brown, I am all ready to go, and reach for my bag only to find that it's still the black one. It's maddening. And in my hurry I leave my money behind or spill my powder.

But I don't do it any more. I've got a bag within a bag! In this I keep the contents of all my handbags so that when I change from one to the other I just lift the inner bag bodily out of one into the other.

You can buy these bags, I believe, but actually they're awfully easy to make. Just a pocket that will fit into all your handbags. It doesn't need a flap as the flap of the handbag proper will keep the contents safely inside.

This will save you time and temper.

★ Only the other day I learned that it's not the moths that eat clothes; it's the larva. Actually a moth does no damage because it cannot eat!

It lives for about a month and during that time the female of the species lays as many as one hundred and fifty eggs, usually on the surface of material and in an obscure corner. These eggs hatch out in about a week and the larva, which is a tiny white worm, emerges and immediately starts to eat.

A horrid thought.

I've always waged a war on moths, but now I know that by killing one I may be preventing a hundred and fifty beastly, little white worms from making a meal of my fur coat, I'm taking up the fight, much more seriously.

And as prevention is better than cure I've bought myself a moth-proof wardrobe. It isn't expensive and it does not take up much room, but it holds everything I want to save from the horrid larva. My winter clothes are safely enclosed in its anti-moth sides.

The people who made my wardrobe (which, by the way, is made of proofed material and folds up quite flat if desired) also produce a moth bag, which is just the right size for storing fox fur ties. This is in proofed sateen and costs only 9s. 6d., which is not very much to pay to prevent your fur from falling apart in your hands some day.

Also you can get many models of ordinary moth bags in different materials, in different sizes, and at varying prices. They all have in common the fact that it is impossible for moths to penetrate these bags and damage the contents.

I always try to keep my furs at home during the summer for quite often I want to wear them on chilly evenings. It's most annoying to find that they're away at the cold storage place. I've been caught that way more than once. Then again, it is said that cold storage is not too good for furs, for it makes the skins become brittle.

So these really splendid moth-bags do solve a problem and are well worth considering. When you want to know more about them, write to me, marking your envelope "Moth," and I will send you full particulars.

★ Recently I went to dinner with an American who had only just arrived in London for his first visit to this country. We were coming down in a crowded lift when he said quite seriously, with a *very* American accent:

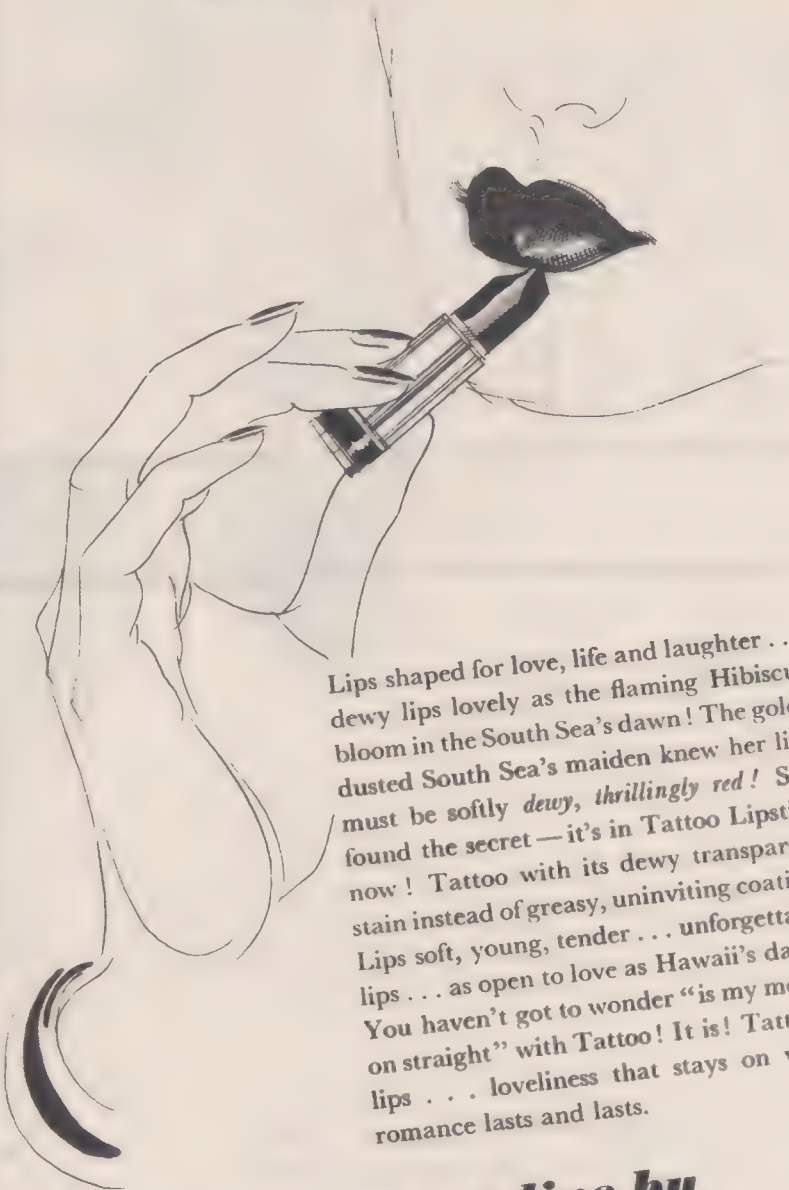
"Say, Virginia, tell me, do *all* Scotsmen wear those little checked skirts?"

And he wondered why we laughed!

If you are interested in any of the things mentioned in these pages, please write to Virginia Hall, c/o "The Passing Show," 92 Long Acre, W.C.2, for she is very willing to help

Gorgeous, glamorous redness . . .

dawn-dewy lips by Tattoo!



Lips shaped for love, life and laughter . . . dewy lips lovely as the flaming Hibiscus bloom in the South Sea's dawn! The gold-dusted South Sea's maiden knew her lips must be softly *dewy, thrillingly red!* She found the secret — it's in Tattoo Lipstick now! Tattoo with its dewy transparent stain instead of greasy, uninviting coating. Lips soft, young, tender . . . unforgettable lips . . . as open to love as Hawaii's dawn. You haven't got to wonder "is my mouth on straight" with Tattoo! It is! Tattoo'd lips . . . loveliness that stays on while romance lasts and lasts.

So lovely are lips by

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Five rapturous shades
Coral · Exotic · Natural
Pastel · Hawaiian
4/6 (refill 3/6)
Tattoo Ltd

TO-DAY the use of a deodorant is as much part and parcel of a woman's toilet as the application of her face powder and lipstick. Particularly is this so during the summer months when we all are far more liable to healthy perspiration. A good many women still seem to regard the use of a deodorant as a sort of necessary evil—an unavoidable, but rather messy and time-wasting business. This need not be the case. With deodorants, as with so many other things in this modern world of ours, improved methods have been discovered. One product, for instance, Perstik, is supplied in "lipstick" form and is most convenient to use. Just a touch or two under your arms and you are effectively safeguarded for hours at a time. For most people only one application per day is necessary. But if you happen to perspire particularly freely it is very handy to have a deodorant which you can carry about with you in your handbag and use at any time necessary and which, because it is non-greasy and harmless to fabrics, can be applied in a second or two without even removing your dress. PERSTIK is supplied through all the usual channels at 2/6.

COURTIERS HAD THEIR FLAWS

I'm not sure of the exact date when the human race first thought of toothbrushes, but it wasn't so long ago as you might suppose. When you think admiringly of the court gallants in the time of Charles I, just remember the one awful fact that they never brushed their teeth, which were usually dingy and often black. Modern Man has his points, comparatively; and modern times, when you can step in to any chemist and buy a toothbrush, have a lot to be said for them. Choose your toothbrush with care, by the way—it's very important to have one that fits your mouth, and that won't go soggy. Halex make toothbrushes with good, *bristly* bristle in all shapes and sizes and hardnesses. Not expensive, either—there are three different shapes at a shilling.

WORLD WITHOUT TIME

BY W. J. PASSINGHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY J. GRAINGER JEFFERY

In small heaps, according to size, were piled rough cut diamonds. I counted six heaps of stones on that rough, dirty table and instinctively sought for the largest of them

WHO'S WHO IN THE NEW LAND OF OOLOOM

SAM KILLICK, a journalist, is describing what happened while he was a member of a cruising party, sailing the southern seas, in the yacht *Solar Star*, which was in the charge of

CAPTAIN JOHN BARLEY, a grey-haired veteran, who realised something had gone wrong with the world when all laws of navigation were upset by a storm that wrecked the yacht's radio and disabled her engines. Meanwhile,

JAMES HENRY WENDERBY, twenty-six-year-old millionaire-owner of the *Solar Star*, and his friends,

"TINY" MILTON, gigantic in stature and in good nature, and Wenderby's cousin, sinister

DOCTOR GEORGE THORMANSON, whose brilliance as a scientist is outweighed by his greed, are surprised when a 'plane lands to leeward of the yacht, revealing lovely

SALLY ALTON, noted girl flier and one of America's most photographed women, and her secretary,

NINA LENNOX, another beauty. They started out on a long distance flight, but difficulties in navigation caused by the storm were too much for them and they were lost, when they sighted the yacht. Eventually, the *Solar Star* drifts to the Antarctic continent and a party goes ashore to explore. Thormanson finds a great stone door leading into a strange new land where they meet a giant,

EENOON, who explains that they are in the land of Ooloom, a land inhabited by giants who not only live to an incredible age, but also communicate with each other by telepathy, and their day is six months of polar light. After travelling through the land Killick is awakened from his sleep to find Thormanson in the hands of one of the giants. He escapes and Killick and Milton go in pursuit but are themselves captured and brought before a venerable giant who, by telepathy, communicates to Killick the history of Ooloom. Later they escape and find their way into a temple where Thormanson is about to be sacrificed.

THORMANSON'S expressions as he struggled impotently between the two Ooloomians, were rendered fiendish by the red glow which suffused this vast temple from end to end. Nobody there took the slightest notice of him, however, and this indifference seemed to increase his rage. All the Ooloomians, standing about in small groups here and there, appeared to be waiting for something to happen and to have no interest in the prisoner. Presently there came a slow stirring among the group of giants about the main entrance to the temple, and gradually there came into view—moving in majestic slow-motion toward the diamond cross—three aged men. The central figure was obviously a person of importance in this place and all heads turned very slowly in his direction.

A man of great stature even among giants, tall and upright, despite his age, he reminded me of the patriarch who had so recently instructed me in the history of Ooloom near the cave of pictures. The respect with which he was greeted on all sides as he stepped so slowly down the temple indicated a priest, or a leader of some kind, and it was with growing curiosity that we watched him reach Thormanson. There followed a tense silence while the aged priest turned and faced the struggling prisoner.

We could hear Thormanson cursing everybody around him. This lasted for a few moments, and then his voice trailed off into silence as something stronger than himself took command. He ceased to struggle, stood quite still and, despite the distance between us, I could see his whole body become rigid. The giant facing Thormanson never moved a muscle as he stared down intently into the face before him. Silence hung heavy as a blanket everywhere while this mental fight continued and I knew George's mind was being read like an open book. We were both outside the passage now, standing openly in the temple, and I could see a startled expression ruffle the priest's calm face, like a ripple over the smooth surface of still water.

"They'll be judging the rest of us by Thormanson after this," Tiny Milton whispered, uneasily. "The dirty swine!"

"Quiet!" I cautioned. "It's all over

now, and I expect they know Thormanson inside and out."

We could see that Thormanson was himself again, and no longer a prisoner. He stepped back a few paces, and suddenly turned like a flash—broke into a swift run toward the doorway, dodging, twisting and turning between groups of giants like a Rugby forward. Too late we remembered that our mission here was to hold Thormanson.

"After him!" Tiny grunted, and together we bounded across the floor on the fugitive's track.

So swiftly did we act that the giants seemed to be stunned with surprise, bewildered by our speed. One thing appeared to be certain now, as we ran on after George, and this was the impossibility of his getting through the main entrance where so many of the Ooloomians were gathered together. Thormanson realised this sooner than we did, however, for he turned and doubled about like a hare for cover. When he caught sight of us he turned again—seeking desperately for a bolt-hole.

While he hesitated we closed in upon him, and then he went on again toward what at first looked like a deeper shadow on the surface of the smooth stone wall. When he reached the spot he disappeared from view as though the wall had opened itself to allow a free passage. It was a narrow exit and I was leading Tiny by a short distance when we reached it. I found myself running on into darkness and, ahead of me, the swift patter of racing feet indicated Thormanson's position.

Farther along the passage the darkness closed down upon us completely and instinctively I slackened speed to negotiate any sharp turns we might encounter. I blundered into the wall before I finally slowed down to walking pace and stopped at last to listen and give Tiny a chance to reach me.

No footsteps thudded along the tunnel ahead now and I knew that Thormanson must have been forced to walk in the utter darkness. But Tiny Milton put quite another complexion on this fact.

"He may have fallen down somewhere. We're mad to run about in darkness, where everything looks the same and probably isn't."

So we went forward more cautiously this time, and had covered a considerable distance before Tiny called a halt with another unpleasant observation.

"It's getting hotter," he remarked. "I believe we're so near that volcano it becomes unhealthy the farther we go down here."

"Thormanson's still ahead of us," I pointed out.

"Maybe he's more at home in hot places," Tiny reflected. "Where do you suppose this subway takes us?"

"We'll know if we keep travelling," I said and moved on down the tunnel. The darkness was still intense, and the heat almost unbearable. Perspiration flowed down me until I was wet from head to heels, with the clothes clinging to my skin. To my fevered imagination it seemed we had covered several miles in that tunnel, and still there was no sign of a break ahead. When we stopped to listen intently there were no sounds to betray Thormanson. This happened several times until at last I had a strange fear of what might be awaiting us down the tunnel.

"It seems to me," I said, "that we're going no place at all. I suppose George hasn't managed to slip past us on the return journey, by any chance?"

"What chance?" Tiny demanded, impatiently. "He's still in front of us somewhere, Sam, and we'll get him sooner or later. Thormanson is out to do something that'll bring all the giants in Ooloom down upon us like a ton of bricks. We've got to stop him."

"He's after diamonds, of course," I said, "and they don't seem to value them very much here. Why not let George take a peek at this place where they keep them, and perhaps he'll be satisfied?"

"Because the source of those diamonds is taboo here, for some reason, Sam. Aaneen told me, warned me earnestly not to go near the place. I understood her to mean that we might be very unlucky afterwards. Mored—the elders of this place might decide to expel us from the country. There is something in the history of Ooloom they haven't told us yet—something vital in their philosophy. She made no threats, mind, but hinted at the exercise of powers we could not understand."

"But how can they possibly know how much we . . .?"

"Make no mistake about it, Sam," he said quickly. "These giant people know far more about us than we know about them!"

I began to wonder, as we went on down that confounded tunnel, where this strange adventure of ours would end, whether we would be able to get back to our own civilisation—and other things which will be made plain, in due course.

Eventually, the darkness ahead became grey, and finally merged into daylight where there were strange surroundings. Hardly had our eyes become accustomed to the light before two Ooloomians were standing squarely in our path—at the funnel-shaped entrance to a cave where the long tunnel ended. I had only time to note that they were dressed differently from any others of their kind I had met, that if anything they were bigger, broader men than we had yet encountered in this country, when Tiny shouted urgently behind me.

"Run for it, Sam! There're others on the way!"

I waited for no more, but rushed straight at the giants and swerved at the last moment—away past them into open country. At a safe distance I ventured to turn my head, and saw that Tiny had easily evaded the big men. Then we both ran on together until it was safe to halt and rest. We were on clear ground at the moment, and I realised that only two chances of escape were clear to us.

Precipitous rocks rose high above us, high above the cave where the long tunnel ended, and we were now on the other side of the volcano. The tunnel we had traversed evidently ran right under the mountain range.

And as I looked back four Ooloomian giants were making the best of their slow way toward us. To go back meant capture.

Our second chance lay right ahead, where in the distance was the strangest prospect of all. I have already described the strange trees of Ooloom—trees known technically as the "prostrate" variety—with short trunks of great girth and exceedingly long branches, loaded with dense foliage which trailed out from the main stem over a wide circumference. Ahead of us, then, I saw a forest of these trees with long and narrow leaves so abundant that the tops of them appeared as a solid mass—a gently heaving sea under the sough of the wind.

The forest became our choice because it not only seemed to offer refuge but was the only path George Thormanson could have taken.

Not until we reached the edge of the forest was the real nature and difficulties of the way revealed. We stepped from broad daylight into a shadowed world, a place of twilight and deep silence, where the giant boles of stunted trees grew bare of foliage to a height of some eight feet and there was a close roof of leaves and branches just above our heads. Not a green thing grew on the ground save scattered patches of wet moss, but above was foliage so dense and intertwined that it lay there like a thatch. The queerest forest I have ever seen, and the most forbidding.

For a long time we stood just inside the first fringe of trees, listening intently for sounds which might reveal the direction Thormanson had taken, and from far away I thought I heard the faint thudding of a man's feet.

"That's Thormanson!" Tiny declared. "Come on!"

I hesitated only a moment before moving off after Tiny, and forbore to point out that our chances of finding George Thormanson in a place like this were small indeed. He led the way between the great tree trunks and, hardly had we started, than I was feeling that the atmosphere of this forest was far from being healthy. Apart from the pungent odour of vegetation, living and dead, the sour-smelling, spongy soil into which our feet sank deep, there was an eerie sensation of being spied upon from hidden places.

We made very slow progress even after we were accustomed to the twilight, and soon I was certain the chase was a hopeless one.

"We're wasting our time here, Tiny," I said at last, and halted. "It's useless to go on. We know nothing of what may be ahead, how deep and wide the forest is, and we've no idea of the direction Thormanson has taken. Let's go back."

"Perhaps you're right, Sam," he agreed, reluctantly, and we turned to retrace our steps.

We walked on in easy stages after that, talking of many things which puzzled us, and some time passed before I realised that we ought to be clear of the forest. Tiny saw me hesitate just then, and read my fears.

"Maybe we both have the same idea," he said, uneasily.

"This is the babes in the wood racket all over again," I answered, "and it's a hell of a place, Tiny."

"Yes, and there's something else biting me," he said, in low tones. "I'll take six to four that somebody, or something, has been tailing us ever since we entered this forest."

A hasty, furtive glance about us revealed nothing which moved between the great trees. "This is no time to play the fool," I protested. "What makes you think that way?"

"I don't know," he admitted. "There's nothing I've seen around here so far, but I'm ready to bet a hatful of money we're being watched!"

"This is a tough spot," I said, seriously, "a place where we could walk for a fortnight and be no better off."

There followed a short silence, while we stared at each other helplessly—and then, suddenly, I saw a change in Tiny's expression. There was hope in his voice when he opened out again.

"Keep quiet for a few minutes, Sam," he said. "I'm going to try an experiment. If I succeed we'll learn something about this place. Aaneen gave me a few ideas about mental telepathy the last time we were together. It's our only chance."

"Go ahead," I encouraged, without giving him my private opinion about his chances of success.

Watching Tiny's fat face with close attention, I saw him stand stiffly to attention—as though bracing himself for an ordeal. Then he began to breathe deeply, evenly, and so he gradually relaxed. Presently his eyes were shut and as the performance went on I found time to take a swift look round. As I turned sharply it seemed to me that something did move way back in the shadows—something that took a quick peep around the bole of a tree. For some time I stared in that direction, but there was nothing doing. When I happened to look round at Tiny again he appeared to be asleep on his feet. I felt I dare not move away just then for fear the movement would interrupt him.

And while I was looking at Tiny there was a soft but distinct scuffle behind me in the shadows!

When I swung round in that direction nothing was moving save the wind-ruffled foliage just above my head. It was a most uncomfortable situation and I began to wish that somebody would start something so I could relieve my feelings. The next few minutes passed in an eerie silence and my hair was rising when the first real sounds broke out with startling clarity at some distance away among the trees. A loud and prolonged screeching, accompanied by the rustling and violent swaying of the foliage overhead. The whole green roof seemed to be shaking with the weight of a heavy body. Then came the scuffle of padded feet tearing up the soft ground, and I looked back at the somnolent Tiny—yelling an alarm as I did so.

The branches were still swaying violently when something which resembled a huge dog, leaped upward out of the shadows, only a few feet away from me. I grabbed Tiny by the arm so that he yelled aloud in sudden fear, dragged him round to the safe side of a tree and steadied him on his feet.

"What the hell?" he cried. "What—what's going on here?"

There was no need for a reply. The dog-like creature had found its quarry in that prodigous leap, and dragged it to the ground amid screams of agony. It was then I recognised one of the great sloths being literally torn to pieces by a huge and very powerful creature of the wolf species. The screaming ceased with the death of the sloth and I had an opportunity to study the shape and size of the wolf-like creature.

It was a huge animal, of its kind, with a wide head and broad muzzle. The jaws were tremendous, and armed with teeth which would not have disgraced a full-grown tiger. Indeed, there were broad, black transverse stripes over its back and tail which suggested the tiger. But the shape of the body was not the same as the great Indian carnivore. I learned, long afterwards, that a much smaller edition of the Ooloomian wolf was well known to zoologists under the name *Thylacinus*, an animal called the Tasmanian Devil, which once roamed the entire Australian continent, but now confined to the island after which it is named.

The body of the creature confronting us was supported on short, stout legs with the hind part tapering gradually toward a thick, powerful tail. This beast was much larger than a timber wolf, such as we know in America, and the most formidable feature was its terrible mouth and teeth. These various points I noted with an observation sharpened by fear and, during those few moments the big sloth was mauled beyond recognition. Standing there fascinated by the terrible possibilities of this creature, I

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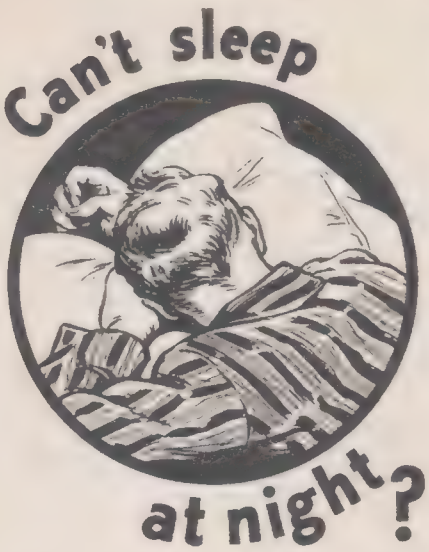

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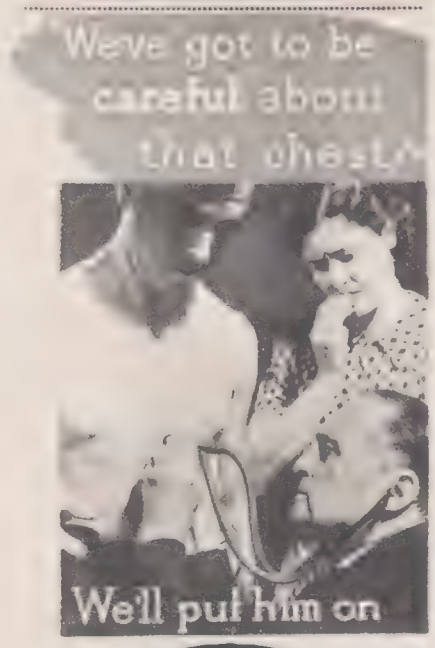

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did not realise our real danger. It was Tiny Milton who brought me to my senses.

"Run, Sam!" he gasped, dragging at my arm. "The forest's alive with these things!"

One quick glance round at many dark forms slinking in our direction from behind the trees, and I was running on behind Tiny as fast as I could put feet to the ground. At first we seemed to outstrip the creatures that pursued us, for they proved to be surprisingly slow in getting into their stride, and then one of the largest of the striped wolves leaped out ahead of us to stand in our path. I saw Tiny fumble in his jacket pocket as he ran, and then his hand came out holding the revolver. We both stopped running while he took deliberate aim and fired the gun at close range. The great beast dropped yelling in its tracks, and we ran on for our very lives.

How long we ran at the top of our speed I have no idea, but it seemed hours to me. When we stopped at last, breathing painfully, I sank to the ground from sheer exhaustion. Tiny was in no better state. We were bathed in perspiration, suffering horribly from thirst, and hopelessly lost in a forest from which there seemed no escape. As soon as we were sufficiently recovered we discussed the situation.

"Tiny," I said, "we've lost all sense of direction, and we're without food and water. We can't go on much longer like this. So what?"

"There's only one chance for us," he answered, earnestly. "I was really in touch with Aaneen when you busted into the business. From certain feelings hard to explain, I have an idea she's still trying to get me. If only you'll keep quiet for a few minutes while I have another go . . ."

While Tiny shut his eyes and settled down, I watched him closely—knowing it was our only chance to get out of this place alive. There were no visible signs of success for some time, but presently I noted a distinct change in his breathing. As the breathing became longer and deeper his face grew pale from a great effort at concentration. I watched him with all my senses alert for the slightest sign of trouble from out the forest. Thus we lay sprawled at the foot of a tree until at last Tiny opened his eyes like one who awakens from a strange dream. There was a startled expression in his eyes as he stared back at me. Then he heaved himself upright, and began to talk sense.

"Get a load of this, Sam," he began. "We're in a spot which, according to Aaneen, is very unpopular in these parts. It seems that the real danger here is not from the wolves, which the Ooloomians claim to handle easily enough, but from some kind of spook."

"Spook!" I ejaculated. "Is that all?"

"Not by a long way," he went on, grimly. "Aaneen says that everybody throughout Ooloom, to the shepherds on the furthest outskirts of the country in every direction, have been warned to keep a sharp look-out for us—especially for that fool Thormanson! They know he's after the diamonds, and the way he slipped out of the temple was no accident. He learned something of the secret, as well as a warning, from the priest under the diamond cross. I had a vision of Aaneen on her knees begging me not to touch the diamonds if we found them. She says there is a spiritual danger, that the diamonds are accursed, and that no Ooloomian will touch one in the spot where they are found in any circumstances because of what has happened here in the past. They still keep a store of diamonds in the caves, left over from what was gathered centuries ago, but nobody has dared to collect more from the original source."

"Yes, but did she tell you how we can get out of this jam?"

"Sure," he said, easily. "But it's this running about after diamonds that has touched them on the raw. The idea is that all evil in this place came from dealing in diamonds, and the country had to be closed to the outside world to stop the invasion. These Ooloomians get scared at the mere mention of diamonds and have even forgotten or lost the art of cutting and polishing the stones. Now that the way to the sea is open again they fear that history might repeat itself."

"All this is very interesting," I said, "but what does she know about getting us out of our trouble?"

"She advises us to look for a very large tree," Tiny answered, "a tree of outstanding size. We shall then find others like it set in two long lines down an avenue which was once a well-used road. The largest trees in the forest form this avenue, and once we've located it the rest will be easy. Shepherds on the outskirts of the forest are now on the way to meet us at the diamond mine—or whatever it may be—with plenty of food and water. They hope we will meet Thormanson, and stop him handling the diamonds. He can move too quickly for the giants, but not for us. In fact, we're their only hope for stopping Thormanson, and I propose stopping him with the hardest punch on the jaw I can muster, when we get our hands on him."

When we started to look about us all the trees in that forest looked alike to me, but some time later Tiny discovered a regular grandfather among them—a tree of enormous thickness—and no sooner had we located it than in the distance I saw another. The problem now became one of direction. Which way ought we to go along the avenue?

We solved the problem by climbing above the foliage so close to our heads. I stood upon Tiny's shoulders against a tree, and forced my head through the branches very carefully. It was a wonderful sight, a sea of waving green for miles in all directions, and high above that carpet of leaves I saw a black pall of smoke over the mountains. When I had taken my bearings, I dropped to the ground and pointed away from the volcano.

"That's our road," I said, and we started walking as fast as we could.

We must have covered more than a mile when there were stealthy, rustling movements behind us which showed we were not yet out of danger. A number of the great striped wolves were following us, gradually closing in, and it was their attempt to get ahead on either side that set us running for our lives again. To my dismay the wolves seemed quite content to keep pace with us, to keep us on the move until we were too exhausted to resist attack. The sound of padded feet drew nearer and at last I could bear the strain no longer.

"Stop and pull that gun again, Tiny!" I gasped. "It may hold them for a time."

Tiny chose a position behind a tree, and we stopped to see what followed us. A huge wolf, standing nearly four feet high from the shoulder, slithered to a standstill and eyed us balefully. Taking careful aim, Tiny fired the gun and the big wolf went down, yelping. At once the rest of the pack dashed from cover and pounced upon the wounded animal, tearing its living carcase to pieces. The wild yelping, the slavering jaws dripping red, made a frightful and sickening sight. We ran on, hoping they would stay behind us long enough to miss our scent.

Tiny was in a bad way, staggering about in weariness and, I too, was at the end of my tether when a gleam of clear daylight revealed the edge of the forest. Where the trees ceased we both sank down to the ground, breathless—and with an overpowering thirst.

"There's two bullets left in the gun Sam" a weak voice whispered.

But I was staring away into the distance at a most welcome sight.

In the distance, across open ground, two gigantic figures were approaching us. When I looked up again some time later the Ooloomians were still far away and stepping out manfully to the rescue. I could wait no longer. My tongue was swelling in my mouth, and I rose painfully to my feet and set out to meet them. The giants were smiling gently, making slow signs of welcome when I reached them. I'm afraid I snatched at a wooden water-bottle the nearest giant held out invitingly. Then I ran on with the precious water to the panting Tiny. Long before the Ooloomians could reach the edge of the forest where Tiny and I awaited them we had satisfied our terrible thirst, and were looking forward eagerly to a meal.

"We've deciphered the message excellency it says—'Use Lava's Soap, sixpence a large packet.'"

The giants watched us with big, sympathetic eyes and, when we were ready, I beckoned them closer. I expected there would have to be some mental communication, but one of the giants was already pointing out our path across the moss-covered earth. Following the direction of his huge arm, I saw that the open ground ended not far away at the bare face of an ice-mountain—where a glacier formed a mighty rampart to the very sky, smooth as an enormous sheet of glass. It towered into the heavens above Ooloom, stretched away into the distance on either side as far as the eye could see, and I knew that here was a boundary of this queer country. No man could cross such a mighty natural barrier as this. Only an aeroplane might reveal to mankind the secrets which lay beyond.

I looked blankly at my guide, and felt his wonderful eyes boring into my mind—searching for my problems. The glacier was much nearer now, as the giant exerted his influence, and I seemed to stand at the base of black, bare rocks upon which it rested. Over the rocks water poured in a gentle fall, and a rivulet ran almost at my feet—on its way, I supposed, to join a larger stream. At a distance of some six feet from the lowest rocks was a wide cleft, and leading up to this opening I detected smooth steps in the rock-face—steps hollowed out by the feet of men through countless ages.

As the vision faded I conjured up a mental picture of George Thormanson, but without any response from the giant. He had never, it seemed, seen such a man as I depicted.

But they knew we had come to see diamonds, for about an hour later—and with their assistance—Tiny and I stood on the highest of those smooth steps leading up to the cleft. When we passed through the cleft I saw we were in a small cave, where light penetrated sufficiently for us to see every corner. Around the walls of this place ran a rough stone ledge—a poor, primitive table whereon the dust of ages failed to dim the reflected light of a thousand fires.

In small heaps, according to size, were piled rough-cut diamonds. I counted six heaps of stones on that rough, dirty table, and instinctively sought for the largest of them.

"Don't touch, Sam," Tiny said in low tones. "I'm not exactly superstitious, but Aaneen begged me not to touch them."

My mind was busy as he uttered this warning—busy in going over all the years I had toiled for a living in a great city where competition threatened my very existence. My toil had brought me little, indeed, save a modest income and here before my eyes—untouched, unguarded, unwanted—was a poor man's dream come true!

"Tiny!" I said hoarsely. "They wouldn't—couldn't miss a dozen of those big ones. I'm a poor man, and it seems sheer nonsense to——"

"I know," he said. "But there are plenty of diamonds in Ooloom without touching these, and you can always ask for them. What's more, I don't think these big people here could deny you the circumstances. If you feel shy about it, I'll ask Aaneen, myself. But don't touch these, Sam. Wait until . . ."

Even now I can remember the chill that ran down my spine at that moment. The words seemed to freeze on Tiny Milton's lips as from somewhere near at hand I heard a distinct chuckle—a dry, unholy sound. We turned at the same time to stare in the direction from whence it came . . .

NEXT WEEK:
Evil of Ooloom

SHOTGUNS FOR TWO

Continued from page 7

show this dago yeh're not yellow!"

Flet laughed. "What job? My papers've been stolen. Judy can do what she likes. And if you think I'm going to stop here so as not to spoil your fun in this murder you're promoting, you can't think straight, that's all!"

"I promised your father to keep an eye on yeh," Mungo said, addressing no one in particular. "I wouldn't like him to turn in his grave——"

"Now you're maudlin. I'm off. Good-bye."

"At least he wasn't yellow! Good-bye to you, young feller."

Flet pulled up. "You really want me to go through with this?"

"There's hundreds who do, all over Europe. A feller doesn't like to hear that when it comes to an Englishman he backs out. This fellah's been laughin' at us quite enough as it is. But, it's for you to decide, m'lad."

If this was all a dream, it was one he did not seem to be able to get away from. "All right!" he decided, savagely. "I'll fight him. And I hope you're satisfied! Now, for heaven's sake, get out of my sight!"

He was sitting staring hard at nothing when Judy found him. "I want to talk to you, Flet," she said.

"Take your chance," he urged, "while you can. Your fiance is going to blow my head off to-morrow."

"You're going through with it?"

"A fellow can't leave it all to the Boy Scouts. Send the body home by sea—it's cheaper than rail. I'll see that you have a good ringside seat. But perhaps your boy friend has already arranged that?"

"Can't you see this is serious?"

"How can I miss it—with shotguns? So you want me to back out and leave your boy friend with the laugh on me?"

"Of course I don't!"

"All right, then. Everything's fine! The fight is on and you can bet your life Uncle Mungo isn't going to let anything stop it. That old blighter'd have me arrested if he saw me trying to leave!"

Judy was twisting a fragment of lace handkerchief and tapping with her slim foot on the stones. "I watched you fight once before, Flet," she was recalling. "It's a long time ago. Do you remember once in Hyde Park when a District Messenger boy accidentally knocked me over and you——"

He saw that her lower lip trembled as if she were on the point of starting to yowk. "We had no shotguns for you, then," he pointed out. "But it seems I'm growing up. Now leave me alone."

Mungo called for Flet shortly before three o'clock that afternoon. Up till then Flet had been living in a sort of daze, but Uncle Mungo changed all that. The unpleasantness was due to be settled in the gymnasium at the back of the hotel, discreetly, on account of the police, and owing to some international protocol touching upon sunset or something, it seemed it was coming off to-day.

"You mean," stammered Flet, "some time before dusk I have to——"

"I mean—now, what?" Uncle Mungo corrected. "Come along just as you are, and don't let anyone see what's in the wind, eh?"

A strange air seemed to hang about Mungo as Flet gaped at him, but nothing about this day seemed real. Paul and a second were waiting in the gymnasium, and, with deliberation, Uncle Mungo indicated the chalk marks on the floor, the guns, the cartridges, the stretchers lying efficiently side by side and the array of surgical instruments laid out on a table. "It is obligatory, gentlemen," Uncle Mungo began with easy oratory, "that we four should be here alone. The doctor is within call and the police will not interfere. Let us proceed to test the instruments." He bowed to the Russian and his second. "Your right, gentlemen, since the weapons are of our choice."

As the old man loaded the shotguns, Flet looked across at his adversary. It seemed Paul was not laughing so much now. Uncle Mungo raised a gun to his shoulder and, pulling the trigger, blew a pair of Indian clubs into splinters. With the second gun he repeated the test, blasting the rump off a vaulting horse.

"Now, gentlemen," he began, as he reloaded the guns, "you will face each other at twenty paces and raise your guns. When I drop the handkerchief, you fire. Is it understood?"

Flet swallowed. He managed a nod.

"Gentlemen! Watch my hand carefully, please! You see I hold the handkerchief. When it falls it may be the last thing either of you will see. Please watch carefully to avoid any regrettable mistake. When you observe the handkerchief to leave my fingers—shoot; It is understood, gentlemen?"

"Yes!" Flet gulped. Why didn't the old fool get on with the business? His nerves were taut to breaking-point. He saw that his adversary was watching the umpire's hand intently. . . .

The handkerchief slipped from those fingers and, shutting his eyes, Flet pulled both triggers.

Death seemed to leap over him softly on the wings of an exquisite silence. He knew he was dead. He knew there was scarcely any pain and the stillness was sad, he considered, yet beautiful. Then a crash burst in on it, startling him almost out of his skin. He opened his eyes. Only Uncle Mungo shared the gymnasium with him. "So I got the second, too," Flet was deciding. "A left-and-right, but—where are they?"

"The way they slammed that door, they must have thought we'd be after 'em, what?" Mungo chortled. "Well, m'lad, someone will have to pay for a new back on that vaulting horse, I suppose. But I'm proud of yeh! I knew that feller would turn yellow and bolt."

"But I shot him with both barrels," Flet argued, weakly.

"Shot him my foot!" The old soldier collected Flet's gun and picked up the other from the floor. "What d'yeh think I loosed off those cartridges for? To re-load with the empty shells, eh? Not that that fellah waited! I'm not a murder merchant."

"You—what!" Colour returned to Flet's cheeks with a flood. "You're telling me you had the—nerve to——"

The door burst open and a whirlwind swept into the room. Arms shot round Flet's neck and he thought the fight was on again, this time as a bout of all-in wrestling. But someone, it seemed, was sobbing against his shirt and this, he argued, would not be Paul. At least, probably not. He saw it was Judy. "Here! I say. What's this?" he asked.

"Oh, Flet! When Uncle Mungo told me you weren't going to fuf-fight after all, I believed him. Then I saw Paul running out and jer-jumping into his car and I flew down here. I thought he had killed you! Oh, I hate him. I hate him!"

"You hate—Paul. This fellow you're going to marry?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes! I knew I didn't really like him when I saw you again. Only if you'd been stuck in that school. . . ." She drew the stranglehold closer. "You're the only man I've ever loved. And I'm glad you're not dead. You're the only man I'll ever love."

"Just a minute!" Things were happening too swiftly for Flet. "Say that last bit over again."

"You never noticed. I've always worshipped you, and you don't even answer my letters."

There is nothing like a duel for clearing the head. Strange feelings were moving him about this girl. "I'll get rheumatism," he stalled, "if you don't lay off my chest."

She turned her face up, and there was something in her eyes that made Flet suddenly proud of having fought a duel for her and (possibly) won it.

"Suffering cats!" he breathed, and holding her away from him, stared into her face. "We'd better go over this conversation again—that bit about me being the only man——"

A heavy snort issued from Uncle Mungo. "G'bless my soul!" he managed. "Been sticking out a mile for years! And what do yeh do about it? Let her go off marryin' dagoes."

Something shot off Flet's chest. "How dare you talk to Flet!" Judy stormed. "You might have killed him with all this foolery. You tell me it isn't going to happen and—haven't you anything better to do at your age than amuse yourself by getting your nephews murdered?"

"Well, m'dear, I—ah—just wanted to get your little affair cleared up, and to save the lad's papers and his job, eh?" Backing away, he edged towards the door, but Flet, with a bound, cut him off.

"You thundering old liar!" Flet shouted. "And you swore you never pinched my portfolio!"

"I told you the truth," Uncle Mungo gasped, scarcely believing it himself. "I caught that feller Henri pinching it the night Marthe kept you out at her villa."

"You—what?" Flet let it soak in. "Where is it now?"

"I took it to the police. They were expecting it. Y'see, I'd been asking 'em some questions about Marthe and I was watching your room for yeh that night. Prr-hmp. And now. . . ." With an accelerating lurch he staggered out of the room.

"If he's not still lying," Flet decided, "I'll be able to start to-morrow after all—and everything's all right."

A feeling as of something soft settling against his chest diverted his attention. When he glanced down eyes opened starrily at him with a technique they had picked up in the last two days. "This might be worse," he acknowledged, as he encircled the girl with his arms.

"*Oh, Flet*!" breathed Judy.

FAST AS THEY MAKE 'EM

Continued from page 9

"Well, mem," he said, rising, "I maun be getting hame. If ye're around at the back o' ten ye'll see the fun."

And he went away home.

He was at the "Black Bull" with Flash by nine-thirty next morning. Armstrong and Bess and a crowd of men were there before him, wetting the occasion in advance; and in a corner, for the moment forgotten, was Millicent.

Willie moved casually in the direction of the local butcher.

"Jings, Shalloch," this worthy said "What's yon came to the 'Black Bull' last night?"

"Yon female?" Willie inquired, at his most innocent.

"Aye, yon female. English, I'm thinking."

"Londoner," Willie explained, out of his superior experience.

"Aye, so she would be. A gey queer lot, they Londoners. Raw meat—that's what they has for breakfast. Twa and a hauf pounds o' raw, red meat. She asked for that, cool as you like. The minute I opened the shop! She'd been standing on the step, waiting. Twa and a hauf pounds o' raw meat, and cut up in chunks—and took it awa' with her as pleased as Punch. And looked like she needed it, forby!"

Willie grinned. Two and a half pounds! Well, that ought to do the trick. He took a squint across the room to Millicent's corner, and noticed a bulge under her jacket.

"Weel," he called to the assembled crowd, "it's time to move." He signalled the barman. "Here, Tam. Tak' hold of Flash here, and Gannock's bit skin and bone, and bring them oot the back. And see there's nae hanky-panky. We'll go round the front."

Tam disappeared with the dogs. They would be kept shut up until the field was ready for them. Millicent rose and went after Tam.

Willie led the way out; but somehow he happened to step aside and let the whole crowd go ahead. He lingered; and in a moment Tam was back.

"Jings, Shalloch!" he said. "Cocktails! I've to mak' a cocktail—whatever a cocktail is! Something they drink in London. A fine-like breakfast for a lassie!"

Willie grinned.

"Who's looking after the dogs?" he demanded.

"Her," Tam replied, shortly, reaching for bottles. Willie turned and hurried out after the crowd.

Tam and Andra were to act as starters, at one end of the great field. The owners and spectators streamed across to the far end, where Willie and Armstrong would stand behind the winning line, waving handkerchiefs to call the dogs.

Ten o'clock. The field was ready. Tam appeared with the dogs, and Andra walked back to join him. They crouched down, holding the dogs back, and the rivals flourished their handkerchiefs and whistled shrilly.

Suddenly Tam and Andra straightened up. Two streaks of grey shot off along the track. A shout rose from the spectators.

Men ran, waving their arms, putting on last minute bets. Flash was leading. Flash was shooting ahead. What was wrong with Bess?

"Come on, lass!" Armstrong shouted, red in the face. Willie grinned.

"Aye, she's coming!" he yelled. "She's coming. When did ye learn her to play Follow-my-leader, Gannock? She does it fine!"

Armstrong, scowling, shouted louder still, and Bess seemed to respond. Or perhaps—was it that Flash was slowing down? Willie glanced at the watch in his hand.

"There's a boy, Flash!" he cried, wheedling. "Come you on, now!"

But Flash did not come on. Perhaps he did not like to leave the lady behind. At any rate, she was almost up to him now.

She drew abreast. She was passing him. Flash would not allow that. Shoulder to shoulder, they sped on . . . and by this time they should have been over the line, well over it. Willie began to feel painfully excited.

Armstrong was nearly out of his mind. The crowd, yelling, was beginning to grin. There were some derisive yells; and the two hounds slowed their pace still more.

"Hey, Andra!" someone shouted. "Awa' and fetch your auld Cairn terrier to pace they twa!"

Bess dropped to an easy lope. Willie's heart leapt. Her tongue was hanging out, her head was drooping, the pace had evidently been too much for her. The race was Flash's now. Bess winded, falling behind.

Willie had a moment of wild elation. And then he stared, and his jaw dropped; for Bess had lain down, and Flash, glancing over his shoulder, went back and gave her a lick, and stood beside her, panting.

"Flash!" Willie roared. "Come here, ye —— !"

Armstrong's bellow drowned his.

"Bess, ye lazy good-for-nothing bitch! Come here!"

The exhausted bitch only looked at him. Flash crossed to the fence and lifted his leg. The spectators howled. Bess, roused by another roar from her master, got to her feet and, while Flash was still occupied, loped easily down the last few yards of the track and crossed the line.

She fell, panting, at her master's feet. She was completely winded.

Willie stared, aghast. Then he felt a hand plucking at his arm. He found a set of rabbit's teeth almost biting his ear, while he goggled at Flash.

"I think it's wicked!" Millicent whispered, fiercely. "These poor things—they're *both* starving! You said Mr. Gannock's dog was starved—but what about yours, Mr. Shalloch? Why, he's as thin as a rake! He wolfed—positively wolfed—nearly three-quarters of the meat I bought for Bess, and poor Bess had hardly any!"

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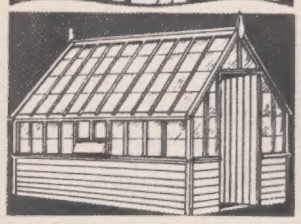

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NEXT WEEK

IF our memory serves us aright, we used to be inflicted at school with the story of King Charles or someone of Sweden or somewhere, whose claim to immortality seems to be that he never smiled again. Which only goes to prove that in his day and age there was no author of the calibre of Eric Knight; and that's not to be wondered at, for writers of such sparkling wit and ready good humour are all too rare.

Knight's brilliant story, "Never Come Monday," which appeared in our issue of April 16th last, was handed enough readers' bouquets to fill a film star's dressing-room for a month of Sundays. So you will all be glad to learn that he has gone one better—or rather three better, for his new yarn, "The Flying Yorkshireman" which starts next week, will be told in three parts.

He was educated in Boston, Mass., but, after serving in the Princess Pat's during the war, returned to the States to show them that the pen can be mightier—and a darned sight more profitable—than the sword, Eric Knight is treading sure ground when he writes of a Yorkshireman who is air-minded without being hot air-minded.

Hollywood may have claimed his service in the cause of celluloid art, but Yorkshire, no less, claims his early days and it is from the land of broad acres that are derived the broad smiles that will accompany you through his new story.

Also in next week's issue will be found another delightful Longshanks story, "The Peacemakers" by Francis Foster, and a further adventure of that Belvedere Tip-top favourite, the head of Delicate Missions, who reappears in A. R. V. Nelson-Smith's new story, "Gentlemen's Disagreement." Florence Kilpatrick supports the distaff side with another Elizabeth in Africa adventure, "The Master Stroke," and among many other notable features is another long instalment of W. J. Passingham's new serial, "World Without Time."

YOU'RE TELLING US!

THERE is something about the rigours of an English summer that induces one of those moods with dark blue edges to it. As the rain dripped from the eaves of our moated grange with all the monotonous persistence of a process-server performing an obbligato on the knocker of our front door, and the scudding clouds, like Ananias and Sapphira, were a low-lying lot, we found ourselves indulging in a bout of soul-searching that would not have disgraced a Tolstoi heroine.

Gazing across the small quagmire that in more arid times poses as a lawn, on an evening when even the stone figure on the bargain-basement birdbath looked more like a gargoyle than a cupid—and a gargoyle is a loathsome thing, God wot—we asked ourselves firmly if we had the courage to do unto ourselves as we do unto others. And that's the heck of a question to answer truthfully, even at the best of times.

For so long have we been having the say-so at the expense of earnest view-airers that it takes some courage to give one of them his head. But fortified by the inspiring words of Uncle Joe the last time he was laid up with an attack of tankard-elbow: "Many a time in my life, I've had a kick in the pants, but I've always taken it square on the chin," we are now lying down for a pair of Caledonian boots to trample on us. They belong to Mr. Ian

F. Buchanan, of Broomhill, Glasgow, who complains, with all the studied earnestness of the Scot on the warpath, that he just can't abide the way we have of making play with the letters we receive each week.

Before criticising our readers, he thinks, we should criticise our authors.

"Possibly you don't do it," says he, "because they are too handy for pushing open your door and pushing in your nose."

As though, mind you, there lived an author of note who was still capable of raising his hand to swat even a fly, after his daily round of slapping his own back.

Anyway, Mr. Buchanan took exception to a story that said, "up there, on those steep, black cliffs, where seas pounded and gulls screamed their weird cries against the dark, rain-swept skies . . . the moat below was dark and still and green . . . The clouds were scudding across seaward and the gulls screamed their eerie cries across the wild, lonely marshland."

"What rot!" echoes our kilted critic, between mouthfuls of porridge. "Whoever saw a moat on top of a cliff the base of

which was pounded by the seas? Whoever saw a cliff bounded on one side by sea and on the other by lonely marshland? And how could a moat be still and green when clouds were scudding seaward and waves dashing? To complete the illusion, the author should have said his hero was waiting there for a street car."

Even when she tries, Aunt Agatha can't be as awkward as that. And, at least, she does know the story about dealing with your own mote first. Maybe when he's tired of criticising our short stories, Mr. Ian will get round to reading about it, too.

We know, of course, that Glasgow is making an exhibition of itself and, therefore, is probably a little more on edge than usual, but we cannot understand Mr. A. Murdock, of Glasgow, E. 1, being troubled by the strange behaviour of the natives when he featured as a hero in a recent street scene.

"While taking a stroll the other evening," he says, as though we can't guess where he'd been, "I assisted in the capture of a man who was found breaking into a house. Eventually I assisted the householder to hold the man down until the arrival of the police, and we were harangued by a crowd of neighbours who seemed so much in sympathy with the housebreaker that they wanted us to give him his liberty.

"The man whose house had been broken into was in very poor circumstances; so were the people who demanded the release of the captured housebreaker. Now, what do you make of that?"

Having weighed all possibilities of local feuds, kindness of heart and whatnot, we can come to no other conclusion than that a Scots' crowd would naturally be so stingy it wouldn't want to give a man away—even to a policeman.

"Foosh, mon," we can hear Colin Glencannon saying, as he reluctantly puts down his glass, "that's no way to advertise the fact that you're eager to get the low-down on life in a hospital."

Leaving aside all question of personal safety, we would linger philosophically on another problem put to us by Mr. J. V. Ritchings, of Clifton, Bristol, a citizen who does not believe in interfering with another man's arrangements.

Mr. Ritchings believes in "keeping his nose clean," as the Americans have it. Even suggests that nothing "should be touched" until the arrival of the police. Therefore, he feels with great tenderness for the fellow who was criticised in a local coroner's court.

"If you saw the poor fellow hanging from a rafter," said the coroner, "why didn't you cut him down?"

"Well, sir," replied the troubled witness, "when I first saw him he wasn't dead."

And we are asked to work that out, too. But what's the use. You would only start arguing if we went so far as to inquire into the sacred groves of interference. And we don't see why we should embroil anybody else in a mess of our making.

YOU'RE TELLING US! Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed on this page. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 93 Long Acre, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs., or Miss.

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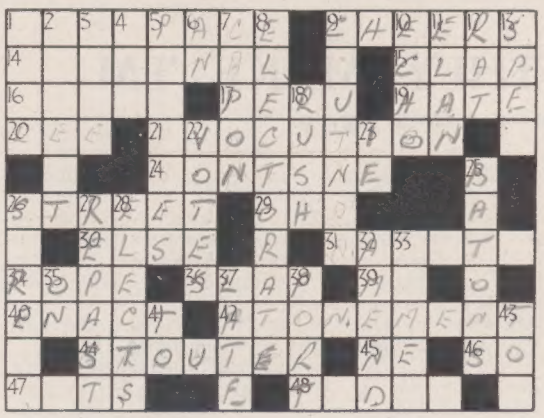
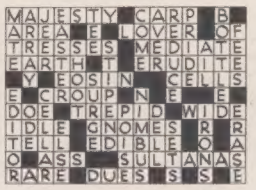


CLUES ACROSS

1. Vehicle before a step for hard shell.
9. Encouraging cries.
14. Not a copy.
15. Possibly for applause.
16. Maybe snake in the grass.
17. This country might be made pure.
19. Unkind feeling.
20. Away from the wind.
21. One's business or calling.
24. Kind of annuity.
26. Fleet is a famous one.
29. A song.
30. Otherwise.
31. Sometimes seen at Cowes.
34. May serve for haulage or suspension.
36. Pals upset here.
39. Abbreviated degree.
40. Perform or establish.
42. Note meant (anagram).
44. Of greater bulk.
45. Tail of 24 across.
46. Thus or therefore.
47. Small spots.
48. A royal line.

CLUES DOWN

1. Source of power.
2. Eager.
3. A journey.
4. Measure of time.
5. Sea-trip provides these.
6. Half 11 down.
7. Had a cap on at the table (hidden).
8. Those with power to appoint.
9. Relish or condiment.
10. Back answer.
11. Lane becomes more lively in France.
12. Animal lurking in 8 down.
13. Scottish river.
18. Onset or attack.
22. How 8 down does 28 down.
23. Brief that is.
25. No tabs (anagram).
26. Extend.
27. A meal if not a feast.
28. What 8 down does.
32. Correct or improve.
33. Carved stone.
35. Tail of 7 down.
37. Behind time.
38. Place of call.
41. Two-thirds of 43.
43. One such is Yes in Devon.



Solution to last week's puzzle

B 253 | 12 | L.S. 7

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I cannot explain how grateful I am for such a remedy. I only wish other sufferers would try 'ASPRO.'

Yours faithfully,
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WORTH KNOWING

School Road, Radwinter,
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Sir,

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Bridge End, Exton,
Bishops Waltham.

Dear Sirs,

I thought I would take the pleasure in writing to say that I think 'ASPRO' Tablets are wonderful things. Why I am writing this is because my husband has suffered a great deal in the head, so seeing these 'ASPRO' so much in the paper I got him some and he says he feels twice the man now.

I am, Yours faithfully,
L. KING (Mrs.).

SLEEPLESSNESS AND VIOLENT HEADACHES GO

J. S. writes from Wirral : "I feel it my duty to write to you about the benefit I have derived from your wonderful tablets. They have been a godsend to me as I have been a sufferer from sleeplessness and violent headaches for years. I was also unable to walk any great distance, but after one month's course of 'ASPRO' I feel a new woman. I began to find relief from the first. I have recommended them to a great many people here and other places confident that they will find the relief from pain marvellous.

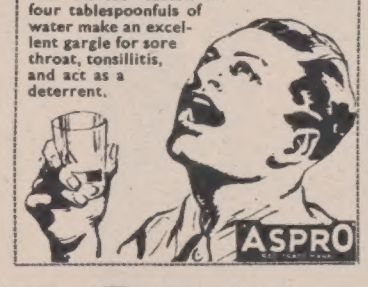
ALWAYS KEEPS 'ASPRO' BY

G. W. H., writing from Lower Broughton, Salford, states : "I have suffered from nerve pains in the head for quite a long while and I tried all sorts of remedies without getting any ease till a friend asked me to try 'ASPRO' and I truthfully say that they are the only thing that will give me relief."

"I always try and keep a few by me."

'ASPRO' AS A GARGLE

Two 'ASPRO' tablets in four tablespoonfuls of water make an excellent gargle for sore throat, tonsillitis, and act as a deterrent.



'ASPRO' DOES NOT HARM THE HEART OR STOMACH

'ASPRO' consists of the purest Acetyl-salicylic Acid that has ever been known to Medical Science, and its claims are based on its superiority.

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ASPRO Limited
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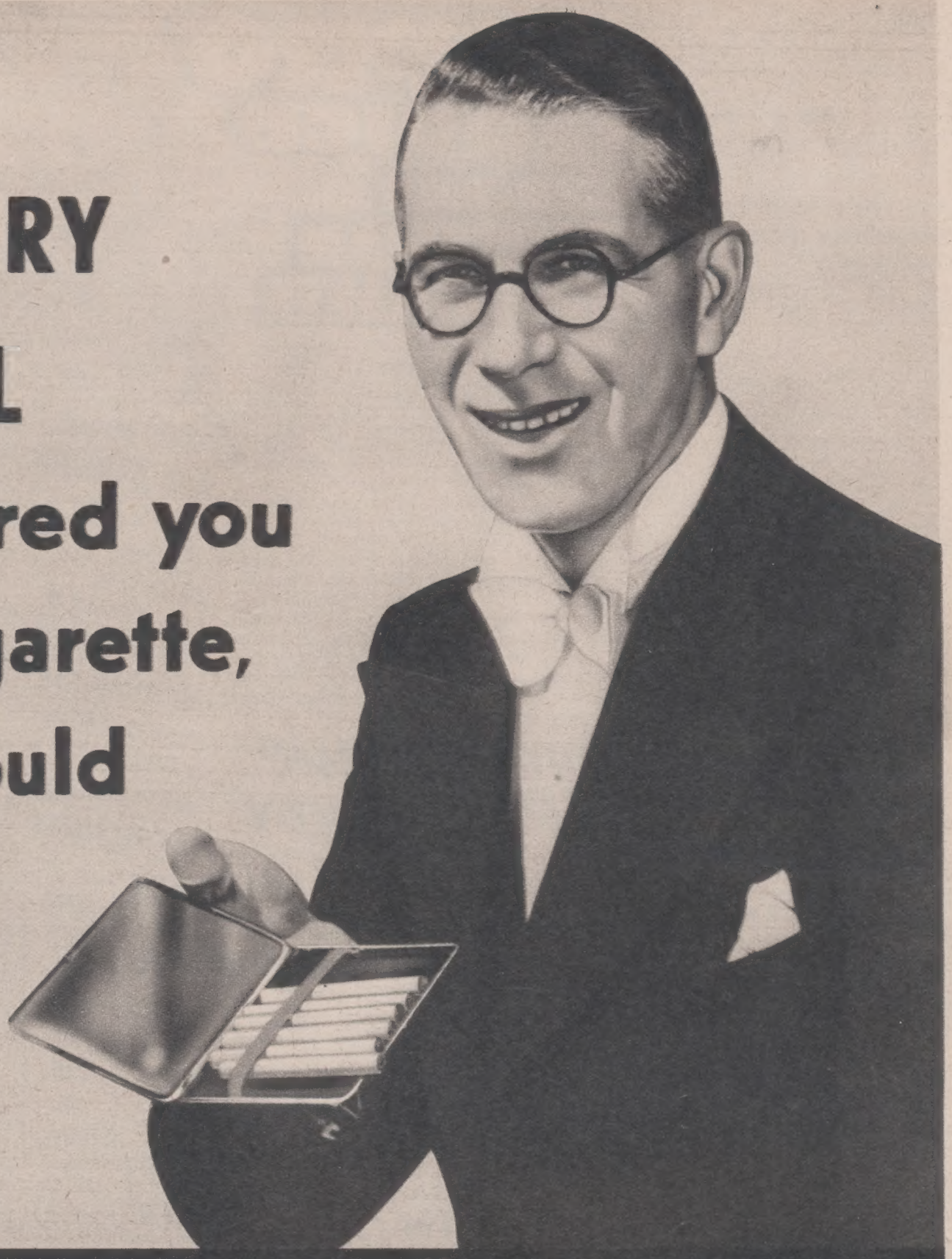

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